BING

SUMMER
2003

No. 134

THE INTERNATIONAL CROSBY CIRCLE

CELEBRATE BING!

1903 **BING CROSBY CENTENNIAL** 2003

THE INTERNATIONAL CROSBY CIRCLE

Founded in 1950

Web sites: Club: www.crosby-circle.org.uk
BING magazine: http.//members.aol.com/macwilmslo/BING_magazine.html

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Membership renewals fall due on 1st. January each year and subscription rates effective for 2003 are:

UK	£12 per annum
Mainland Europe, including Eire	£13 per annum
USA and Canada	US $20 per annum
Australia and New Zealand	A$40 per annum
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All remittances should be sent to Michael Crampton in £ sterling payable to 'International Crosby Circle' with the exception of:
(a) U.S. and Canadian members who should send their remittances in U.S. dollars to F.B.Wiggins
(b) Australian and New Zealand members who should pay David Currington in Australian dollars
(c) Mainland European members (not Eire) who should pay Gun Damo in £ sterling.

Articles for inclusion in the magazine should be sent to the Magazine Editor.

Other Correspondence concerning membership, non-arrival of the magazine or other aspects of the club's affairs should be sent to the Secretary/Treasurer please.

BING is the official journal of the International Crosby Circle and is published in the Spring, Summer and Winter of each year. Opinions expressed in articles are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of the ICC.

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EDITORIAL

Well, we've had two major celebrations at Milwaukee and Spokane and bursts of activity all over the place. Kathryn Crosby is continuing the promotion of her book and in turn this is drawing attention to Bing's centenary. With many official sources still maintaining that Bing was born in 1904 there is nothing to stop us celebrating the centennial until the end of next year and we already have a suggestion that a major event is organised in Dublin next year.

Never before have I felt that we just couldn't mention everything that is going on. So many members responded to our appeal to seek publicity and we have seen newspaper articles and heard about radio and theatre tributes from all over the world. I could start the list with Greg Van Beek, Ken Gray, Doreen Hubbard, Hank Sipila, Seamus Kelly, Don Small, the Essex contingent and Arthur Blood but we can't mention them all so will everyone who made the effort to contact their local media about Bing please accept the heartfelt thanks of Bing fans everywhere. Wig tells us about some radio coverage in the USA and Bert Bishop gives details too but we have missed a lot out and we can only apologise for this.

The Bob Hope centennial in May received very good coverage both in the USA and the UK and Bing invariably cropped up in relation to this. A number of members sent greetings to Bob which I know would have been very much appreciated by the Hope family. Our cover photos this time mark the centennial of both Bing and Bob and we thank Greg Van Beek for providing the front cover and Jon Oye for the item used at the back.

In this edition, we have detailed reports on the Milwaukee and Spokane celebrations and I take great comfort from the enthusiasm of the members taking part in these. With 'young' energetic supporters such as Steven Lewis, Greg Van Beek, Judy Schmid, Barry Stapleton, Martin McQuade, Jane Fitzgerald and Sue Horn to mention a representative few, we can feel assured about the future of the Crosbyana movement. Also in this issue, we welcome back Ken Crossland (still on the right side of 50!) who will be looking after the *Keeping Track* section from now on. I had promised to reproduce part 2 of Howard Crosby's article about his uncle Bing but this will now appear in our Winter edition as Howard has been snowed under with commitments in recent months, especially in connection with the Gonzaga event where he did a great job.

At Gonzaga, we saw the new KSPS-TV documentary, *Bing Crosby - Going My Way*, and hopefully this will start appearing on PBS stations all over the USA in the coming months. Talking of television, our new TV book, which is titled *The Chronological Bing Crosby On Television*, is virtually complete and we are seeking orders in advance for this limited edition. The 2004 calendar is in course of preparation too so get your orders in now.

Special congratulations are due to our wonderful

Photographs Editor, Ron Bosley on his 80th birthday. I attended a surprise party for him in June and it was lovely to see Ron's amazement when he found 40 of his friends and relatives assembled to celebrate the occasion. Naturally the birthday cake had a Bing image on it too.

Please note the new Internet address for the club and Michael Crampton's e-mail address has changed as well. Looking ahead to the merger with Club Crosby, it might make sense for some rationalisation of our various sites to take place in conjunction with Steven Lewis of the Bing Crosby Internet Museum. We shall consider the matter in the coming months.

As Michael Crampton reminds us, this will be the last magazine issued on behalf of the International Crosby Circle as next time we shall be part of the new International Club Crosby. The annual meeting at Leeds in October will of course be the first for the UK branch of the International Club Crosby. It's going to be an exciting new era for the Crosbyana fan movement.

Malcolm Macfarlane

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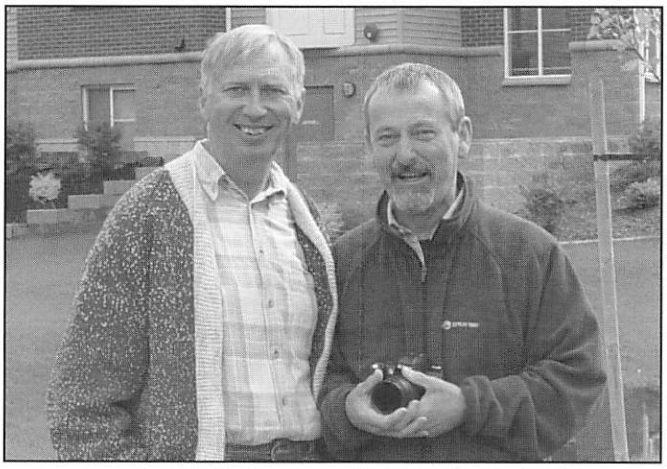
SECRETARY / TREASURER'S REPORT

It may come as a surprise to many members that BING magazine has been published in the name of the International Crosby Circle for the past 37 years. Issue 134 is our final magazine under the much loved banner of International Crosby Circle and we can look back with immense pride on the accomplishments of the club over so many years. Our founder, the late Frank Murphy and his successor Reg Bristo would have been proud of the way the club has developed and grown.

Sensibly and for the very best of reasons we are joining with Club Crosby to form the new club - THE INTERNATIONAL CLUB CROSBY and your magazine will carry this title from issue 135 of BING. Club Crosby was founded in 1936 and is the oldest fan club in the world and now becomes the International Club Crosby.

Bing's centenary continues to be recognised by the media and you will read much of this in the current issue of BING. Gonzaga is celebrated and I have very fond memories of the events, which took place over three days in Spokane, Washington, the city where Bing spent 22 years of his early life. Perhaps the most memorable event for me was hearing Bing's voice, coming loud and clear over the university tannoy system, throughout the three days. It was especially poignant to hear Bing's voice beautifully clear from within St Aloysius church and to reflect that Bing had officiated and sung there eighty years before. Pleasing too that access to Bing's house is easy and encouraged. The events celebrated Bing's life and achievements and it was very evident that Spokane is proud of being associated with Bing Crosby. Malcolm has the full story.



David Currington (left) with Michael Crampton at Gonzaga

NEW MEMBERS

It's a real pleasure to welcome 50 new members to the ICC in this edition of BING. Many were taken aback by the quality of our journal and the fact that the content is so interesting and that we sustain interest in our subject some 26 years after Bing's passing. Hopefully they will pass on the good word and encourage others to join us.

Wig and Laura Wiggins deserve special mention for the professional way they encourage new members into joining the ICC. We are indebted to both for their continuous support and dedication.

ENGLAND

Joseph Baron (King's Lynn), Richard Crow (Hemel Hempstead), Mike Devonshire (Rickmansworth, Herts.), Harold Fish (Tavistock, Devon), Yvonne Heward (Horncastle, Lincs.), Mr. R. A. King (Folkestone), Bert & Joyce Padbury (Oxford), Brenda Trowell (Hastings), Mrs. B. A. Sellers (Louth, Lincs.), Mr. D. R. Stokes (Bradford-on-Avon, Wilts.), Phil Suffolk (Oldbury, West Mids.) and John Whittaker (Dukinfield, Cheshire).

SCOTLAND

Matthew McNichol (Coatbridge, Lanarkshire).

WALES

Hayden Adams (Swansea)

UNITED STATES

Theodore Agemblast (Mineola, New York), Stephen Van Benschoten (Tenafly, New Jersey), Nelkane Benton (Los Angeles), Otto Bruno (Rochester, New York), Rory Burke (Agoura, California), Murray Cizon (Portland, Oregon), Matt Connor (Little Falls, New Jersey), Helen Coyle (Bay Shore, New York), Leo Cullinane (Potomac, Maryland), Eric Dafoe (Colleyville, Texas), Tom Degan (Goshen, New York), Andrew Dubois (Cambridge, Massachusetts), R. Kent Edwards (Port Jefferson Station, New York), Paul Ewell (Seattle, Washington), Windy Ferguson (Martinsville, Virginia), Mr. & Mrs. Bud Giles (Pebble Beach, California), Albert Grant (Oceanside,

California), Brian Hansen (Northridge, California), Tanna Havlick (Reno, Nevada), Robert Ingves (Point Roberts, Washington), Edmund Kavanagh, (Washington, Virginia), J. Michael Kearsey (Portland, Oregon), Martha Koehler (Greensburg, Pennsylvania), Thomas McNulty (Bayside, New York), Thomas Monaghan (Ann Arbor, Michigan), Sr. Mary Francis Moore (Massapequa, New York), William Moynihan (Jamestown, New York), Lorraine Myers (Ronkonkoma, New York), Rev. Robert Noguera (Miami, Florida), Al O'Hagan (Brooklyn, New York), Robert Packard (Juno Beach, Florida), Mike Person (Williamsport, Pennsylvania), Stephen Russell (Belle Vernon, Pennsylvania), Lee Spilberg (Manhasset, New York), Marilee Stankowski (Milwaukee, Wisconsin) and Paul Zagorski (Waupaca, Wisconsin).

CANADA
Roy Robinson (Coquitlam, British Columbia)

DONATIONS

We begin with apologies to John Bignell and Arthur Blood whose generous donations we failed to acknowledge in the spring edition of BING. The following members, who have given generously in edition to their annual fee, support John and Arthur's goodwill. We are most grateful for their support and if we have missed any member's donation then please let us know and we will correct the omission in the next edition of the journal.

Mr. J. R. Baker, Ian Bell, Mr A. C. Bowerman, Frank Brannigan, Donald Flear, Bill Humphries, Campbell McIntosh, Margaret Rattigan and Jeremy Rose.

DEATHS

With sadness I must draw to members' attention to the passing of three more of our enthusiastic members. Ray Torey (Croydon, Surrey), Ken Moore (Weymouth, Dorset) and Ronald Makins (East Ham, London). All three enjoyed receiving and reading their ICC journal and we learnt of their enthusiasm and interest from the letters received from their families. We extend our sincere condolences to all whose lives Ray, Ken and Ronald touched.

BING AT THE BARBICAN LIBRARY

Richard Tucker, the music librarian at the Barbican in London suggested to the ICC that we mount a display at the library to celebrate Bing's centenary.

After a tremendous amount of hard work and making contact with many Crosby enthusiasts, we were able to mount the exhibition in the library from 6th of June to the 19th of July. We would like to thank Derek Perkins, Keith Parkinson, Bert Bishop, Ron Bosley, Trevor Wagstaff, Bill Wesley and his brother for their support in making this exhibition possible. Your secretary co-ordinated the work and provided supporting art work. The photo shows Trevor Wagstaff admiring the display watched by (left to right) brothers Gordon and Bill Wesley.

I hope to see many of you at Leeds but until December, my best wishes to all members.

Michael Crampton
June 23, 2003

THE CROSBY YEARS

by Gord Atkinson

When my radio anthology of Bing's life and times was produced in 1975 I required the assistance of skilled technicians and full studio facilities. To accommodate sponsors each program was limited to 53 minutes of content. As producer-host of the series I am now benefiting from today's technological advances and the wonderful support of the ICC.

My purchase a few years ago of a revolutionary Mini Disc Digital Audio System made it possible for me to do all the editing on the re-release of these award-winning programs. With no commercial time restrictions I am now extending each program to between 60 and 74 minutes and including interviews and recordings not featured in the original series. The Mini Disk masters are enhanced on CDs by Terry Mask Productions.

In addition to the original 12 programs a prologue and epilogue will be released by the end of this centennial year of Bing's birth.

Now, Parts 9 and 10 are available for your collection. Our special guests on these two new releases include Bob Hope, Andy Williams, Henry Mancini, James Van Heusen, Lillian Murphy (Bing's secretary), John Scott Trotter, Sammy Cahn, Frank Sinatra Jr., and Kathryn, Gary, Bob and Larry Crosby.

Part 9 features more memories of the "Road" movies, recollections on the making of "Going My Way", Bing's Oscar presentation, his Irish connection, a western encore and the background story to his popular duets with his son Gary. Also included is an insight by Kathryn Crosby into the controversy and grief surrounding the publication of Gary's book. Her comments were taped during an interview that took place a short time after the book was released.

Part 10 reviews Bing's memorable movies and

recordings from the late 1940s to the 1960s, his fondness for the music of Latin America, his admiration of Louis Armstrong and Frank Sinatra, his business interests, his favourite leisure time activity, his move to San Francisco, his love of family and his great gratitude for the support of his countless friends and fans around the world.

Gord Atkinson signs his CDs at the recent Gonzaga event

These two programs, when first broadcast around the world, were acclaimed by some Crosby fans as among the best in the series.

All previous CDs are still available, Parts 1 to 8 and the 2-part "Crosby Christmas. Due to an increase in costs it has been necessary to make a very slight adjustment in the price of US sales. Please see below for details.

My sincere thanks for your kind and thoughtful comments. It was a pleasure meeting fellow fans at Gonzaga. My very special thanks to Malcolm Macfarlane for his support.

Gord Atkinson

(Editor: As before a separate insert regarding these episodes of "The Crosby Years" is enclosed for UK readers, and US and Canadian members can obtain the CDs from "The Crosby Years", Anderson Publishing, 102 Boyce Avenue, Ottawa, Ontario, K2H 6J2, Canada. [Phone (613) 721-0811] For US and Canadian orders please note that payment can be made by check, Visa or MasterCard. The new secure e-mail address for orders is admin@anderpub.com

The cost is now $24.00 US for 2 CDs and $13.00 for one CD which includes postage. Canadian purchasers should pay CAN $30.00 for 2 CDs and CAN $16.00 for one CD.

As Gord has mentioned the earlier offers of the 2-part "A Crosby Christmas" and parts one to eight of "The Crosby Years" remain available.)

The Chronological Bing Crosby on Television

This new book has been compiled by Lionel Pairpoint, Greg Van Beek and your Editor with much help from Martin McQuade. Running to almost 200 pages with about 80 photographs, some of which have never been published before, the book is an in-depth look at Bing's TV career. We think that we have details of every major show in which Bing participated and full details of songs and other artists are given together with contemporary press comment where available. The page size is the same as Lionel's radio book and Wig's discography. Paper quality is the same as the magazine and there is a laminated coloured glossy cover. In short it is a very prestigious book which will be the first publication of the new International Club Crosby.

The club cannot afford to print large qualities of the book in advance and we are seeking payment up-front from those wishing to purchase this collector's item. It is unlikely that this book will ever be available again so, if you want one, send off your payment as soon as possible. A separate insert is enclosed for UK readers and all other members should apply through their local representative. When the orders are received, we shall tell the printer how many to produce but be warned we shall only have a few additional copies available for those who don't read their magazine very promptly.

Because it is a limited edition and as we want it to be a high quality production, the cost is £24.99 (including post and packing) in the UK, £26.99 in Ireland and Europe, $50 in the USA and Au$65.99 in Australia and New Zealand. It's not cheap but it's worth every penny!

The MCA Legal Battle

Pat Shields sent me the following extract from Daily Variety of June 4.

> THE SONGS ARE ENDED but the malady lingers on. Bing Crosby's estate and the trust of his first wife, Dixie Lee (Wilma Wyatt), first filed suits against MCA Music in July 2000. A final hearing was due May 23, but it was postponed by a request for an emergency hearing in the court of appeals. That decision is due today and, if granted, will mean another delay of months. Otherwise, the case finally will be heard Monday in Judge Terry B. Friedman's Santa Monica Superior Court, Case SC-062601. Many million$ are involved dating back to contracts of 1943, 1949, 1956 and 1986. A similar case led by Peggy Lee vs. Universal Music Group (MCA Records) resulted in a $4.75 million settlement to a group of 161 musicians (as reported in Daily Variety last June 26) ...
>
> Meanwhile, Der Bingle's voice goes on as Michael Feinstein readies Crosby radio material never released before, plus three CDs of Crosby-Rosemary Clooney teamings dating back to 1932. Feinstein's also prepping a centennial tribute to Crosby to be held at the Academy. Hard to believe, Hope and Crosby were both born in 1903. (Bing died Oct. 14, 1977).

Developments are awaited.

THAT'S ENTERTAINMENT

As we said in the editorial, we can't comment on all the tributes to Bing which have taken place in the UK and as a representative report on behalf of some of these, Ernie Dolman tells us about a special event he attended.

On Saturday, 22nd March, a packed Festival Hall in London thoroughly enjoyed a musical concert entitled 'THAT'S ENTERTAINMENT'. It was a 'Celebration of Classical MGM Film Musicals' including 'HIGH SOCIETY', 'THE WIZARD OF OZ' and 'SINGIN' IN THE RAIN'. Most of the musicals, nineteen that night, had been orchestrated and reconstructed by thirty-year old musician, John Wilson. For in 1969, an MGM executive had ordered the destruction of the studio's music library as it "took up too much space" to quote John in the programme.

On stage with seventy musicians and the Crouch End Festival Choir with many splendid renderings by Maria Ewing, Tim Flavin and Gary Williams, the evening was an unqualified success. John Wilson's achievements in music are breathtaking and he is recognised internationally as an expert in the specialised fields of light and screen music. He also has a sixteen piece orchestra and is Musical Director at The Royal Garden Hotel in Kensington, London, where they regularly perform.

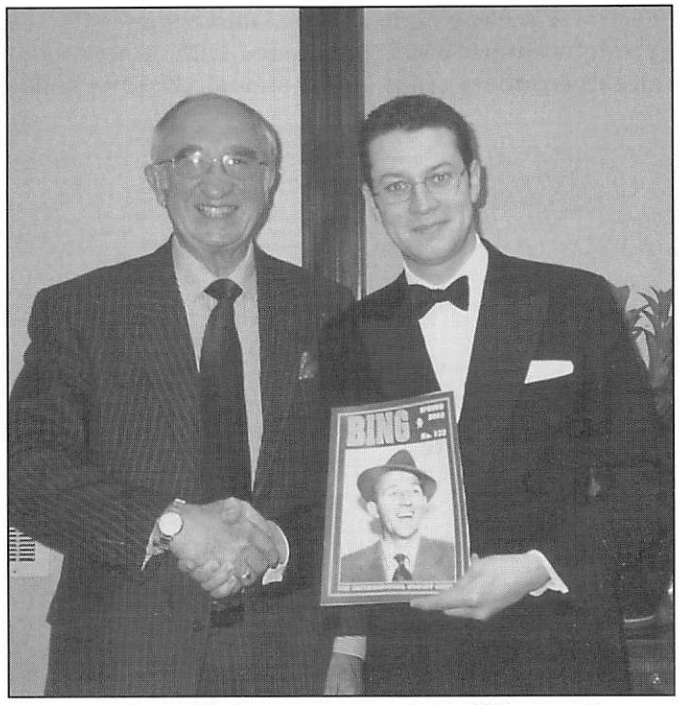
My good friend, Trevor Wagstaff of Hornchurch, noted this fact, and sent a letter to the Maestro politely asking whether a musical tribute could be played at The Royal Garden Hotel in view of Bing's Centenary. A quick affirmative reply followed thanking Trevor for "bringing it to his attention and you'll be happy to hear I'll be dedicating a section of my show to him at the Royal Garden Hotel on Saturday, April 26th at 8.30."

Unfortunately, Trevor could not attend on this day, so Shirley (my wife) and I deputised and duly arrived at 7 p.m. for a 7:30 dinner at the very elegant hotel right next to Kensington Gardens where Princess Diana, once lived. A chance meeting in the foyer with the immaculate and charming Mr. Wilson happened whilst the three of us waited for the lift to ascend to the 10th floor Restaurant. He was delighted to receive the current BING magazine and chatted as Shirley took our photo. A memorable moment. Far better than any aperitif.

At 8.30 p.m. the orchestra struck up with 'SKYLINER' then 'It's D-loverly', 'Easy to love', 'I won't dance' and 'I Love Paris' which got the dancers going. These great standards were a joy to hear. His orchestrations with emphasis on strings that accompany beautiful trombone and sax/clarinet melody lines with John on the piano created a wonderful atmosphere.

At precisely 9.37 p.m. the moment had arrived. He announced to a happy buzzing crowd that we were approaching Bing's Centenary and that he had a medley of songs to follow. Do you know there was a distinct hush almost as if in homage to the great man?

The John Wilson Orchestra played 'Pennies From Heaven', 'Please', 'Go Fly A Kite', 'Be Careful It's My Heart', A Pocketful Of Dreams', 'Moonlight Becomes You', 'Lazy' (vocalist Sara Moule), 'Stardust' (vocalist Gary Williams).



Ernie Dolman presents John Wilson with BING magazine

We finished at 11.30 p.m. Oddly enough we met John and some of the musicians as we piled into the lift. We thanked him again. This had been an unforgettable night. In fact have booked a table for July. Well done Trevor for making this possible for us.

Ernie Dolman

(Editor: Elsewhere, our member John Petters has been busy all over England with his Crosby Centenary Jazz Show [see also 'Keeping Track'] and Roy Chappell has popped up at several locations too in THE SENSATIONAL CROSBYS with The Gresty / White Ragtimers. In the USA, Benjamin Sears and Bradford Conner have been putting on special tributes to Bing in parts of Massachusetts and so it goes on.

Meanwhile, at the Palladium. . .)

The London Palladium plaque

Shortly after noon on Saturday the 3rd May 2003, six unofficial ambassadors from the Essex contingent of the ICC hung a commemorative wreath on the bronze plaque of Bing that is a permanent fixture in the foyer of the London Palladium. Our party comprised Bill Wesley and his brother Gordon, who made the wreath, Trevor Wagstaff, whose idea it was, Wally Oldfield, Bert Bishop and Margaret Klisky.

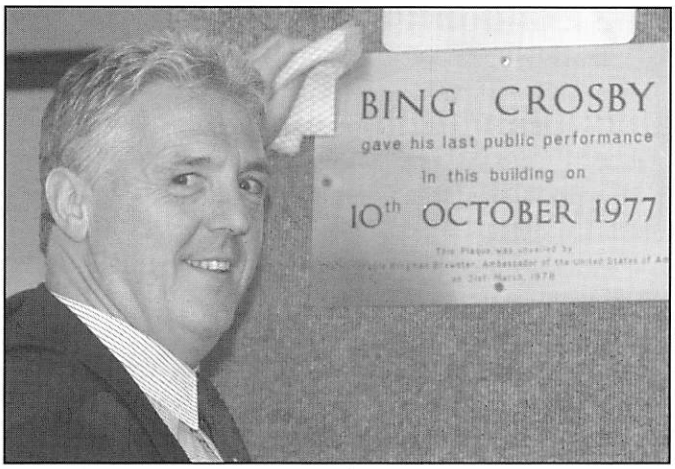
We were received, by prior arrangement, by Danny, the stage door manager who was a very friendly and accommodating chap who couldn't have been more helpful, only too happy to take photographs for us on our still and video cameras. He told us that Bing's plaque creates quite a lot of interest among visiting theatre-goers and assured us that the wreath, which was artificial greenery with blue and gold ribbon, would stay up for quite a while. The inscription read as follows:

For Bing on his 100th Anniversary
A unique entertainer remembered with affection by all the members of the International Crosby Circle

By way of a bonus to the visit we were invited on stage to pose for photos in front of the *Chitty Chitty Bang Bang* car which is the principle prop of the current production there. All in all a very successful occasion further enhanced by a fruitful visit to HMV Records which is almost opposite the theatre!

Bert Bishop

The Brighton Plaque



You will recall that we gave details of the attempted sale of the plaque commemorating Bing's last performance and the apparent action by the Brighton Centre in the UK in selling the plaque enraged many of our readers. George Patmore wrote a superbly irate letter to the Brighton Centre with a copy to the Mayor of Brighton and to the local newspaper, the *Evening Argus*. The Argus telephoned the Brighton Centre and were told that the plaque was still in place and that they were mystified by the matter.

A reporter from the Argus was referred to me by George Patmore and in turn I e-mailed the lady who was attempting to sell the plaque. She was amazed also but she commented:

> *"Another possibility which also seems quite likely is that there were 2 plaques made. I am saying this because on the bottom of the particular plaque, which I still have, there was a mistake made in the lettering of a name at the bottom, which has been very discretely covered up by the maker. Maybe this was not satisfactory for the commissioner of the plaque and therefore a second one had to be made."*

This must be the explanation as naturally a plaque with a mistake on it would be rejected. Whoever had the rejected plaque must have given it to a charity and it found its way into the hands of the lady who tried to sell it. It might still be worth buying by a Crosby fan and I suggested to the lady that she advertised it in our magazine. She has not replied.

The outcome of all this however was that Bing received some very nice publicity in the *Evening Argus* which Mervyn Thomas of Worthing kindly copied to me. Our thanks also to the *Evening Argus* for supplying the photograph for our use.

Malcolm Macfarlane

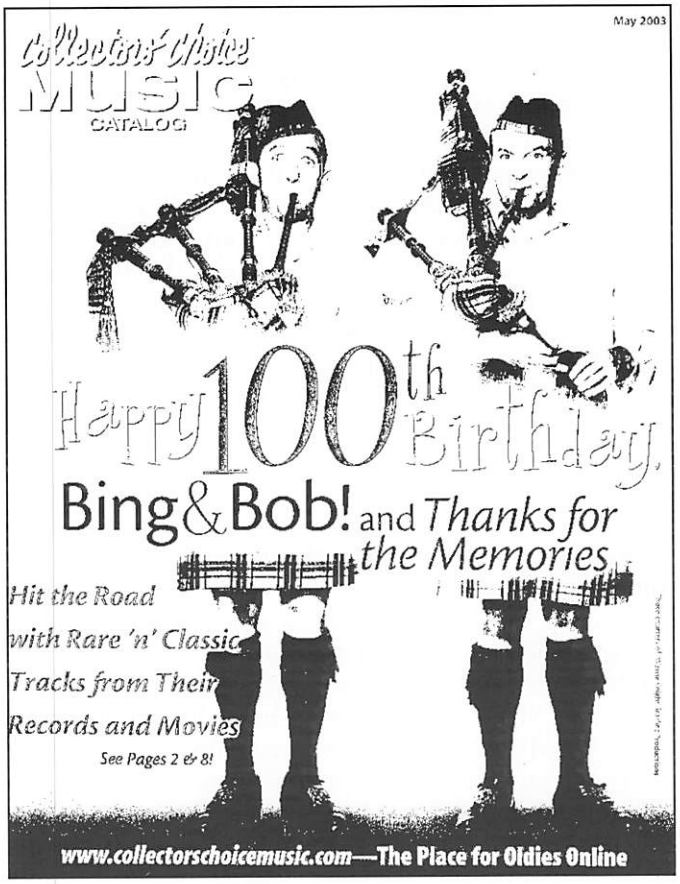
NEWS FLASH: Bob Hope Dies

News of the death of Bob Hope on July 27 reached us when the magazine was in the last stages of being printed. We were all saddened by the loss of this major entertainment figure who was inextricably linked with Bing for so many years. We have written to the Hope family expressing our condolences and we shall carry a full tribute in our next issue.

BING IN THE USA

BING'S CENTENNIAL OBSERVANCES

The 100th anniversary of Bing's birth has been marked by many activities throughout the United States, including national press coverage, the showing of a number of his films on cable television, the re-release of a group of his movies on DVD, and numerous special radio broadcasts on many local stations as well as over nationwide syndicated networks.


May 2003
Collectors' Choice
MUSIC
CATALOG
Happy 100th Birthday,
Bing & Bob! and Thanks for the Memories
Hit the Road with Rare 'n' Classic Tracks from Their Records and Movies
See Pages 2 & 8!
www.collectorschoicemusic.com—The Place for Oldies Online

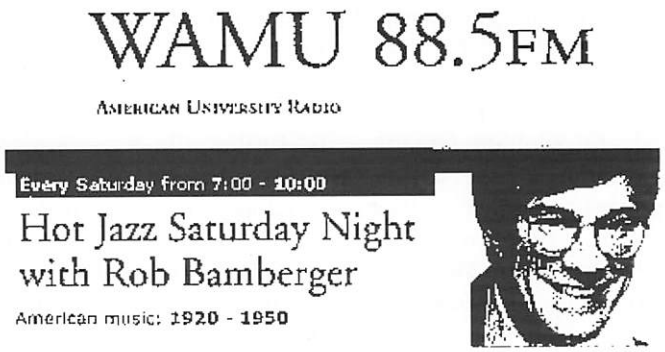
Many of these activities have resulted from ongoing efforts by ICC/Club Crosby members, including "Centennial Committee" stalwarts Pete Cakanic, Judy Schmid, Ernest Sutkowski and Greg Van Beek. In addition, others such as John O'Brien in Birmingham, Alabama, Ken Gray in Pittsburgh and Harvey Sheirr in New York City also were instrumental in arranging excellent radio coverage in their own areas as well.

Starting with the outstanding Hofstra Conference that was held last November, and followed by the Gonzaga celebration in May, it is safe to say that Bing's life and career as the most popular entertainer of the 20th century is being well and properly brought back to the attention of both longtime Crosby fans and the general public in a manner that has not occurred since his passing a quarter of a century ago.

In this regard, I would particularly like to commend the many efforts of Ernest Sutkowski of Saddle River, New Jersey. Over the past six months, in addition to his supportive relationships with a number of radio broadcasters in the greater New York area, Ernest has also undertaken a nationwide e-mail campaign with many other radio stations that has resulted in more than 25 special broadcasts in cities ranging all the way from New England to California, and even in such far-flung locations as Alaska and Guam. Ernest also has arranged for the Museum of Radio and Television Broadcasting in New York City to present a feature program on Bing's career later this year.

As for myself, I was pleased to be able to assist in the development and presentation of three special radio programs honoring Bing—a local three-hour celebration of his recordings that was heard throughout the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area, plus two syndicated broadcasts that were transmitted across the United States. I would like to describe those three broadcasts in greater detail for BING readers as follows.

BING ON "HOT JAZZ SATURDAY NIGHT"



For more than 20 years, "Hot Jazz Saturday Night" has been one of the most popular weekend radio programs in the Washington, D.C. area. A three-hour labor-of-love which is produced and presented from 7:00 to 10:00 p.m. every Saturday evening over American University station WAMU at 88.5 on the FM dial by my good friend, Rob Bamberger, this special program features the best in American and international popular music from the 1920's through the 1950's. Rob takes particular delight in sharing with his listeners the top jazz artists, dance bands and popular vocalists taken from his massive personal collection of records that embraces everything from rare 78s to the latest CD reissues. A long-time fellow-member of the ICC, and a regular supporter of the "Chronological Bing Crosby" series on Jonzo Records, Rob Bamberger often includes some of his favorite Bing Crosby recordings as part of his programs on station WAMU.

A few days before Bing's 100th birthday, Rob telephoned me to say that he would be devoting his entire three-hour program on May 3rd to Bing, and that he would like to have me appear with him during the first hour. He also asked me to select the songs to be played during that period. Although I wasn't feeling too well because I was suffering from the annual springtime allergies that infect many in the Washington area, after a push from my wife, Laura, and my son and daughter, I agreed to "give it a go" for Bing's sake. I decided to

select a group of songs from the 2-CD "Centennial Anthology" of Bing's Decca Recordings that I had recently compiled for Universal Music in California, along with a couple of titles from his earlier career, to present a general overview of the best of Bing's recorded legacy to "Hot Jazz Saturday Night" listeners.

Before beginning, Rob told me that he liked to start each program with an unannounced, and generally upbeat, selection by his featured artist, so we chose Bing's 1938 recording of "You Must Have Been A Beautiful Baby" as the opener. To follow, I asked Rob's agreement to play what I consider to be two of Bing's seminal early solo recordings for RCA Victor: his unique 1928 version of "Ol' Man River" with Paul Whiteman, and his break-through hit with Gus Arnheim from 1931, "I Surrender, Dear".

Thereafter, we turned to other key selections from the Universal "Centennial Anthology" CD set. To highlight Bing's re-recordings for Decca of his earlier hits on other labels, we chose his 1940 version of "I Found A Million Dollar Baby", especially because of Bing's excellent whistling interlude on the second chorus of this record. Thereafter I selected Johnny Mercer's delightful parody "I'm An Old Cowhand" as an example of his easy-going way with country and western material, followed by a Hawaiian song that Bing often described as one of his favorite recordings, "My Isle Of Golden Dreams". To further illustrate Bing's wide-ranging versatility, Rob Bamberger and I then played a medley of three of his best known early film songs, "June in January" from *Here Is My Heart,* "Pennies From Heaven", and "A Pocketful of Dreams" from *Sing You Sinners*. We also managed to get in a plug for Gary Giddins' biography in conjunction with the last title.

Rob had warned me in advance that the hour would pass all too quickly, and he certainly turned out to be correct, as we had to skip over several other proposed titles (including "McNamara's Band", "It's Been A Long, Long Time" and "I Can't Begin To Tell You") and finish with two examples of Bing's up-tempo jazz classics for Decca, his infectious 1940 duet with Connee Boswell on Sy Oliver's "Yes, Indeed!" and his boisterous 1952 version of "South Rampart Street Parade" recorded with the Andrews Sisters.

All in all, it was a most interesting experience to be on the air with Rob Bamberger on Bing' s behalf, and to offer his many listeners the opportunity to learn more about the ICC, the availability of CDs of his best recordings, especially the Jonzo series, and general information about his life and career. I have had quite a few telephone calls, letters and e-mails as a result, and I would like to thank Rob Bamberger for everything he did to make this all possible.

During the second and third hours of his special centennial program, Rob played many of his own favorite Crosby recordings, generally from the 1931-1934 period, all taken from his own copies of the Jonzo CD series. Beginning with "I'm Through With Love" from Bing's first national radio broadcast on September 2, 1931, Rob followed with a group of his 1931 Brunswick hit records, including "Where The Blue Of The Might", "Out of Nowhere", the original version of "I Found A Million Dollar Baby", "Just One More Chance", "Star Dust", "I Apologize" and "Sweet And Lovely". Rob also played two of Bing's 1931 solo hits with Gus Arnheim, "Fool Me Some More" and "I'm Gonna Get You" to round out this period in Bing's career.

Turning to Bing's early jazz and swing classics, Rob then featured "Dinah" and "Shine" with the Mills Brothers, "Sweet Georgia Brown", "Some Of These Days" and "St. Louis Blues" with Duke Ellington. Other top ballads from Bing's Brunswick years were played as well, ranging from "Let's Try Again", "Paradise" and "How Long Will It Last?" from 1932 to "Snuggled On Your Shoulder" and "I've Got The World On A String" from 1933. In addition, Rob played a trio of Bing's early film hits, "Our Big Love Scene" and "May I?" from *Going Hollywood* and 'Love thy Neighbor' from *We're Not Dressing*. Rob also included what he described as two extraorindary recordings from the same studio session of October 25, 1932, "Brother, Can You Spare A Dime? (the anthem of the Depression) and Bing's long unissued end-of-session solo classic (with Lennie Hayton on piano), "Sweet Sue, Just You".

Finally Rob Bamberger closed this unprecedented three-hour tribute to Bing with the immortal "Please" from *The Big Broadcast* and the most appropriate final line from Bing's Mack Sennett soundtrack recording "...soon we must say, Auf Wiedersehen, Auf Wiedersehen, my dear..."

I would like to express my sincerest personal thanks to Rob Bamberger for everything that he did to honor Bing's memory on this occasion, as well as for his continuing support of the ICC and Jonzo Records over the years. By the way, Internet listeners throughout the United States and around the world can enjoy "Hot Jazz Saturday Night" on a regular basis by tuning in to www.WAMU.org, and I highly recommend that you do so. Bing certainly will be featured again in the future on this fine program.

In closing this report, I would like to include the text of an e-mail that my daughter, Joanne, received from a friend that she had notified about my scheduled appearance on "Hot Jazz Saturday Night":

> "Joanne-
> Just wanted to let you know that my mother and I listened to your dad on Saturday! My mom was thrilled. One of the songs selected was a tune my mom and her best friend used for a dance routine in a competition—and they won a prize. When that song came on the air Saturday, my mom cried. With her health the way it is right now, the program was so beneficial in lifting her spirits. Also she learned a lot about Bing that she hadn't known. She sat right next to the radio and hung on your dad's every word! Many thanks."

Even though the efforts of each of us to keep Bing's memory alive are always more than worth whatever is required on our part, it was truly heartwarming for me to learn that, on this occasion, at least one lady's spirits were bolstered by Bing's voice and the fond memories that he brought back for her. To say the least, that knowledge certainly made this experience a memorable one for me as well.

AND BING WAS ON "BIG BAND JUMP" AS WELL

Since 1986, one of the most popular musical programs heard throughout the United States and Canada has been a weekly two-hour tribute to the very best of the big band era which is syndicated to nearly 200 radio stations across North America. Produced and hosted by longtime broadcasting personality, Don Kennedy, from Atlanta, Georgia, "Big Band Jump" serves to keep fresh and alive the work of the musicians and vocalists from the swing era in an appealing and informative manner that is attracting a new generation of fans to the popular music that dominated our culture in the 1930's and 1940's.

To indicate how individual efforts to promote Bing can sometimes pay off, I would like to reproduce part of a letter from fellow-ICC member Pete Cakanic that was published in the latest "Big Band Jump" newsletter:

> "Bing Crosby would have been 100 years old on May 3, 2003. Most young people don't know and many older people have forgotten the tremendous impact Bing had on American culture and entertainment, but Bing has been trashed in the last 20 years, or ignored. I hope you can do a tribute to Bing near May 3rd."
>
> Don Kennedy replied, in his newsletter:
>
> "Mr. Cakanic is, of course, absolutely correct about Bing Crosby's superstar status in movies, on radio and on records. He is also correct about Bing Crosby being virtually ignored in recent years. Thanks to Mr. Cakanic's letter, we've scheduled a tribute to Bing Crosby on our May 24-25 Bing Band Jump."

And, indeed, he did. After telephoning me several times from Atlanta to discuss the makeup of his forthcoming program, Don Kennedy put together a fine one-hour tribute to Bing, utilizing facts from the ICC's "Bing Crosby Information File" and other material that I sent to him, along with a selection of his own favorite Crosby recordings. Heard during this "Big Band Jump" program were twelve songs by Bing, including several duets with other artists, taken from studio recordings, film soundtracks and radio transcriptions. Don Kennedy began the hour with the 1947 version of "White Christmas" and closed with Bing's 1945 recording of "Where The Blue Of The Night". Also featured were a number of Bing's best-known film songs, namely "True Love", "Moonlight Becomes You", "Swinging On A Star" and "Road To Morocco' (with Bob Hope).

Don also played two film soundtrack songs, "Be Careful, It's My Heart" from *Holiday Inn* and "I've Got My Captain Working For Me Now (with Billy De Wolfe) from *Blue Skies*. Turning to Bing's radio years, Don Kennedy played "Singing In the Rain" from a 1952 broadcast, "That's A-Plenty" (with Connee Boswell), also from 1952, and a 1953 duet with Rosemary Clooney on "It Takes Two To Tango". In conclusion, Don played two tracks from Bing's 1956 album with Buddy Bregman's big band, "Mountain Greenery" and "Have You Met Miss Jones?", and Bing and Rosemary's swinging version of "On A Slow Boat To China", recorded with Billy May's orchestra in 1958.

As Don Kennedy told me, he seldom does anniversary tributes of this nature on his program, but in Bing's case he felt it was more than appropriate to do so. And for that, all ICC members can be sincerely grateful.

Anyone who would like to know more about Don Kennedy' s excellent syndicated radio series can write to him in care of the Big Band Jump Newsletter, P.O. Box 52252, Atlanta, Georgia 30355, or find him on the Internet at www.bigbandjump.com Believe me, it's well worth a listen if you like the music of the swing era.

BING STARS ON SATELLITE RADIO

There is a possible revolution underway in the field of radio broadcasting in the United States. It is called "satellite radio", and the largest network of this type is headquartered near me in Washington, D.C. Featuring 101 digital channels of music, sports, news, talk and children's programming, XM Satellite Radio provides round-the-clock, nationwide broadcasting that offers the

same, clear programming whether you listen in Maine, Florida, Texas or California. A special home radio unit that works on your existing stereo system, or an adapter that transforms your car stereo system into a digital receiver, will enable you to pick up your favorite programs anywhere in the country, even while traveling.

Broadcasting from satellite transmitters in a manner similar to "global positioning" systems and so-called "direct" television channels, a major feature of this two-year-old radio system is its large number of commercial-free music channels, including four that play hit recordings from specific decades in the history of modern American popular music, ranging from the forties to the sixties.

Several weeks before Bing's birthday, I was pleased to receive an e-mail and follow-up telephone call from Marlin Taylor, program director of XM Satellite's "big band and swing" music channel, inquiring about the ICC and Bing Crosby recordings. Marlin informed me that he was in the process of assembling a collection of top hits from the forties and fifties for his programs, and he knew Bing had been responsible for many of the biggest ones from that era.

During our conversation, I advised him of Bing's forthcoming centennial celebration and recommended that he plan a special broadcast to mark the event. Marlin readily agreed, and said that he would happily devote a full three-hour period to Bing's recordings if I could assist him in obtaining access to enough Crosby material to fill that much air time.

I laughingly responded that would be very easy to do, and sent XM Radio a copy of the latest issue of BING, the "Bing Crosby Information File" and a copy of my new 2-CD "Centennial Anthology" set of Bing's Decca Recordings for his use on the program. After XM Satellite Radio obtained special authorization from Universal Music, I am pleased to report that Marlin Taylor played all 50 tracks from the "Centennial Anthology" set over nationwide satellite radio to honor Bing's birthday. Marlin also plans to repeat this special Crosby tribute on several other occasions during the coming months, as well as featuring some of Bing's number one hit recordings from time-to-time on his regular satellite broadcasts.

The complete track listing of the "Centennial Anthology" set was previously included in BING #133, and it is further reviewed in the "Keeping Track" column of this issue, so I won't repeat any of the titles here. However, I would like to note how extraordinary it was to have all 50 of these fine recordings by Bing played on a single radio program in this day and age.

It also was gratifying to see that Bing isn't being forgotten by this newest American radio medium, even if the golden age of popular music that he dominated has largely disappeared from most standard broadcast stations across the country. ICC members with Internet access who are interested in further information about the 21st century's latest digital development can find it at www.xmradio.com Details also can be obtained by writing to XM Satellite Radio, 1600 Eckington Place, M.E., Washington, D.C. 20020.

F. B. (Wig) Wiggins

(Editor: It's very pleasing to read of these broadcasts involving Wig and I would like to echo his comments about the wonderful work done by so many members in obtaining radio and newspaper coverage in their areas. We can't mention them all but we are so very grateful.

One celebration we must cover took place in Wisconsin and Greg Van Beek sends us his report.)

Wisconsin Celebrates Bing Crosby's Centennial

This past April, Southeastern Wisconsin celebrated the life and times of Bing Crosby in grand fashion, for the occasion of the 100th anniversary of his birth. There were features in newspapers, on the Internet, as well as on radio and television, all capped off by a wonderful one day conference with none other than our honorary President, Kathryn Crosby, as the featured guest.

My friend Barry Stapleton, who is the director of the John J. Ward, Jr. Irish Music Archives in Milwaukee, mentioned to me while we were browsing the Crosbyana display at Hofstra, that he was going to organize a similar celebration for Bing, albeit on a smaller scale, at the Irish Fest Center in April and said he would like to have me be a part of it. The Irish Fest Center houses the John J. Ward, Jr. Irish Music Archives, as well as the Stapleton Bing Crosby Collection, the largest public Crosby record collection outside of the memorabilia housed at Bing's alma mater, Gonzaga University in Spokane, Washington.

In the weeks following our second meeting, I was busy preparing a film presentation for the event, as well as compiling CD's to be used as background music and for upcoming radio promotion. By this point, things were falling into place nicely, and news of the event was spreading rapidly. Barry had assembled a display of Crosby memorabilia at the Wauwatosa Public Library, which helped a great deal. Early on, the event was added to the line-up on onwisconsin.com and onmilwaukee.com, two websites devoted to happenings around the state and around the city respectively. By March 31st, Bing's photo headed a column appearing in the Milwaukee Journal-Sentinel newspaper, followed by a large front page spread in the CUE section of the Sunday April 6 edition, written by noted journalist (and Crosby fan) Chris Foran. The piece, the most impressive of all coverage of Bing's centennial and the event, featured interviews with Gary Giddins, Steven Lewis (webmaster of the Bing Crosby Internet Museum) and Kathryn Crosby. As a result, there was excellent coverage in print of the celebration, which garnered an impressive turn out.

Soon the big week arrived and with it, some very exciting and hectic days. Since Mrs. Crosby and I had become better acquainted in recent years, having met in person a few times and phoning each other on occasion, I arranged with Barry to bring her to my home in West Bend Friday evening to be interviewed with me for our local West Bend News newspaper to promote the event. A reporter had been wanting to do a story on me for a couple of years, and I always kept putting him off until

there was something more substantial to promote. With Bing's impending centennial, the celebration in Milwaukee, and Mrs. Crosby's visit, I felt the time was right. I spent all of the week prior to Mrs. Crosby's arrival arranging portions of my Crosby collection in several rooms throughout the house. Everywhere you turned, there was Bing!

Mrs. Crosby and Buddy Bregman both arrived late Thursday, April 10, so that they could spend Friday promoting the event on radio and television. Both had a very busy schedule, with Mrs. Crosby appearing on the local Fox TV network 7am news along with Barry. In addition to the centennial celebration, Mrs. Crosby was also promoting her fabulous new book *My Last Years With Bing*. Proving what a real trouper she is, she handled this early morning interview with the same ease, grace and charm that endeared her to everyone she came in contact with throughout her stay in America's Dairyland. From 8:30am to 9:30am, I presented a program of Bing's duets on Tom Shanahan's Club 60 program over WTKM radio in Hartford, Wisconsin. I arranged for Kathryn to be our live call-in guest, and she proved to be a wonderful addition to the show and a great promoter for the celebration in Milwaukee. We opened the show with the Bing Crosby & Fred Astaire duet 'Roxie', from the hit musical *Chicago*, which she loved. She has a very ingratiating, animated personality that puts everyone completely at ease.

At 11am, both Kathryn Crosby and Buddy Bregman appeared on the Milwaukee NBC-TV affiliate's 11am newscast for a joint interview with a respected local news anchor who seemed genuinely interested in Bing. As with her appearance on the Fox network, Mrs. Crosby held her book up proudly and paged through it, holding up various favorite photos so the cameraman could get a good shot of them. She's an excellent salesperson without a doubt!

Following lunch and a brief respite, Mrs. Crosby, Barry and Buddy made their way to yet another radio interview at 2pm for station WUWM. This interview was not broadcast live as were the others, but was taped for broadcast the first week of May to coincide with the actual date of Bing's centennial. Then, it was off to station WOKY for a 3pm interview with veteran Milwaukee broadcaster Bill Taylor. Bill is known for doing his imitation of Bing's speaking voice at the drop of a hat, and wasted no time in doing so for Mrs. Crosby, who roared with approval. It was here where I met up with Mrs. Crosby.

After the interview at my home, my parents and grandparents and I planned to take Mrs. Crosby out for dinner to help us celebrate my grandfather's 87th birthday, which took place April 12. My dad, Tom, and I traveled to the WOKY radio station and visited with Barry Stapleton outside the studio waiting for Kathryn and Buddy to finish their interview. They were gathering quite a crowd outside the studio door, as word spread around the building that Mrs. Bing Crosby was inside. All waited patiently for a photo or autograph. She was most gracious and signed each one.

After Mrs. Crosby emerged from the studio, we shared a happy reunion with a hug and headed out to the conversion van we were using, as Barry and Buddy went on their own to see a bit more of Milwaukee and have dinner. Buddy had given Mrs. Crosby a copy of his Ella Fitzgerald 'Rodgers and Hart Songbook' CD, so we popped it into the CD player in the van and headed for West Bend. She and I chatted a bit about a friend who sent some videotapes for me to pass on to her from his production company, which is interested in doing a project on Bing, and also about a few mutual friends.

Once we arrived at our home, she stopped for a moment as we were walking towards the front door and exclaimed what a beautiful home it was, larger than her ranch in Nevada. We went inside and I introduced her to my mother, Barbara. We began to show her around the house, starting with some of the 10-inch and 78rpm albums I had downstairs in the den, when Al Dunn, the reporter from the West Bend News arrived with his wife, followed shortly thereafter by his photographer. We all took a seat in our living room so that Al could ask Mrs. Crosby a few questions as I showed him a copy of her new book and BINGANG magazine. Then, we headed to the dining room, where I had used the table to display some of my 12-inch LP's. I chose some of the best color covers of Bing, which made for an impressive display. Mrs. Crosby said "this is great, you know Bing hated sitting for album cover shots, so it's really nice to see all of these." She picked up a few, notably the 'A Couple of Song and Dance Men' album (she's holding this LP in the photo which appeared with the West Bend News article). She told us "this one I remember well because I was there for it. Our son Harry was involved with the whole production of the album, and he was the only person who could say 'Uncle Fred, that doesn't sound quite right, let's try that again'." When she spotted the 12-inch picture disc of David Bowie's most famous duet, she remarked how she asked David if he was ever poked in the eye. "David has one blue eye and one black eye, and he told me that as a boy, he was poked in the eye by a pencil which ruptured his pupil. He's blind in that eye." All the while we were chatting, the news photographer was shooting pictures of us.

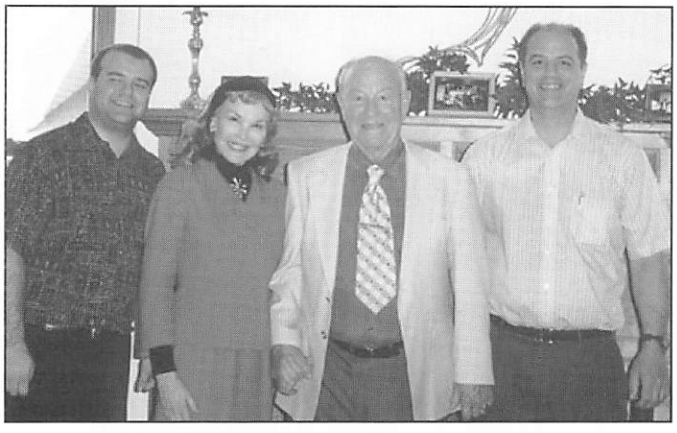
Kathryn inspects Greg's wonderful collection.

We then made our way upstairs, to where I had a display of Bing Crosby magazines. Mrs. Crosby thoroughly enjoyed seeing these, many of which were new to her. Pointing out an issue of *Family Weekly* from 1973 with a color photo of Bing and Mary Frances, she exclaimed "oh I love this, I've never seen it before." I showed her a Spring 1941 issue of BINGANG, which was the 5th anniversary issue, featuring a letter from Bing which she read. I have Bing's copy of the script for the 1967 *Hollywood Palace* Christmas show, which was sold at the Butterfield auction in 1982. The script had written in ballpoint pen on the cover multiple times "Perino's Restaurant". She confirmed to me that was Bing's handwriting and told me they had the best caviar in town. "When I was pregnant with one of the children, I had a mad craving for caviar, and that was the only place to get a certain kind."

A bit further down the hall brought her to my bedroom, where the bulk of my collection resides in a walk in closet. Once there, I showed her a few more scripts from Bing's collection, one being from the *Road to the Moon*, a synopsis written by Bill Morrow for a proposed *Road* film that never got on the road. Another was from the 1976 Bob Hope Olympic Benefit, which she paged through looking at Bing's notes. "Yes, he wrote this, but this other note was written by someone else." It was great having her there to confirm these things!

Around this time, my Grandparents, Ervin and Rosemary Van Beek arrived. Now I had told Mrs. Crosby it was Ervin's birthday the next day, so when she was introduced to him, she immediately burst into a chorus of 'Happy Birthday', followed by a hug and kiss! This was the only time I'd ever seen my grandfather blush! I showed Mrs. Crosby some of the products that Bing had lent his name to, namely the mouse trap, coffee tap, 2-cup coffee pot, rainwear, etc. She told me "that was all Everett's doings, he arranged all of those things for Bing." When she saw I had one of Bing's neckties, she said "you have a necktie!? I got rid of dozens of those!"

Back downstairs, we all got together and posed for some of our own photographs, one being a rare three-generation shot with Mrs. Crosby. That has become a real keepsake for our family.



(l to r) Greg, Kathryn, Ervin Van Beek and Tom Van Beek.

I brought down one of my photo albums and showed her some of the handwritten letters I have that Bing wrote, in addition to my collection of Kathryn Grant film stills. That was a real trip down memory lane for her, recalling when they were done or from what film. "oh this was from my very first sitting", she remembered when she saw a particular series in a leopard skin bathing suit. "Those shots were published all across the country." She went on to say "if I'd have known about all of these great color photos while I was writing the book, I would've raided your collection!"

By now it was time for us to meet our dinner reservations. We chose a nice restaurant on Big Cedar Lake called the Linden Inn. The conversation ran the gamut, alternating from news about the Crosby family, to Ervin's 70 years riding a motorcycle. He mentioned to her that he read Arnold Schwarzenegger was running for office, to which Mrs. Crosby said, "well he's married to a Kennedy, so he must be a Democrat." This led me to inquire about Bing's relationship with President Kennedy. "They were casual friends, golfing friends only" she replied. Mrs. Crosby graciously signed a few napkins for the staff, met the chef, and then presented Ervin with "the most personal birthday present I can give you, because it's all about me", that being a copy of her book *My Last Years With Bing*, which she inscribed for him right there at the table.

With that, we bid the Linden Inn farewell and traveled back to Milwaukee to take Mrs. Crosby back to her hotel. Once again we had a nice chat about a variety of topics. She mentioned she drives every day, and has an SUV. My parents also have an SUV, so they asked her what make it is. "Mercedes," she answered. "I still have the 1975 Mercedez SL Bing gave me as well." We talked a bit about her film career, that she really did do those scenes on the high wire in *The Big Circus* "only the wires were much closer to the ground than they appeared," and that she once turned down a role in an Elvis Presley film because "it just was not right for me." *Anatomy of a Murder* was her final feature film. She made it while pregnant with Mary Frances. She's a member of the AMPAS committee which helps choose the best actor, actress and film at the Academy Awards. She gets sent tapes of all of the new films to review, and most she only gives 5 minutes viewing they're so bad. I told her what a travesty it was that Eminem, the controversial rap singer, won an Oscar for song of the year, beating out a great song from *Chicago*. "I don't vote on that. Evidently he had all of his friends vote for him. I haven't attended a concert or seen a movie at the theater in years because they're just too loud. They really overdo the volume levels."

Saturday, April 12 started out buying newspapers. Al Dunn, the reporter who covered Mrs. Crosby's visit to my home, worked through the night right up to the deadline to get the article completed and on the front page of the West Bend News by 5am, having left us a little after 6pm. Through his hard work and dedication, the Bing Crosby Centennial Celebration received one last minute "plug", which I'm certain helped bring in more fans to the event.

Upon arriving at the Irish Fest Center, I was overwhelmed at what I saw. It was literally wall-to-wall Bing! Barry had huge blow up photos of Bing on each

side of the stage, a display of Bing's Irish music and film posters, a 78rpm exhibit, photo and magazine exhibit, a gold record for the 'Merry Christmas' album, not to mention the large contributions of the Stankowski-McGuire family. They graciously loaned many rare pieces of Crosby sheet music, which provided an outstanding display of Bing's universal appeal. There were covers from all around the world, including England, Ireland, Australia, Belgium, the Netherlands, and on and on. They are to be congratulated for their hard work in assembling this marvelous display.

I arrived at about 10:45am, so I was able to take a little time to look over all of the displays and photograph them. Soon Barry arrived with Mrs. Crosby and Buddy Bregman, and we all had a nice visit, posing for photos and keeping our celebrity guests busy autographing memorabilia. Mrs. Crosby loved the *West Bend News* article, and couldn't get over the fact that we made the front page! Buddy Bregman was a friend of Gary Crosby, which is how he came to work with Bing. Privately we discussed Gary, and his portrayal of Bing in his book *Going My Own Way*, which Buddy says is "totally false." At 12 Noon, the doors opened and the fans who each paid $10 to attend began trickling in. All told, there were at least 175 people in attendance, with close to 200 people in total inside the building, a fantastic turnout! Evidently, there are a lot of "closet" Bing Crosby fans in this area! Special mention needs to be made to Jane Fitzgerald who drove all the way from Cincinnati (a 7 hour trip one way) to get here. Also member Jon Oye drove up from the Chicago area with his wife. It was great seeing so many familiar faces and notables from Wisconsin, like Tom Shanahan from WTKM radio in Hartford, who has been in radio 60 years. When I introduced him to Mrs. Crosby, he told her that in 1943, so great was Bing's popularity that there were no less than three Bing Crosby programs daily on the station where he worked!

At 1pm we all took our seats; Barry had special seats reserved in the front row for Mrs. Crosby, Buddy Bregman and myself side by side. Barry did a very eloquent job of introducing everyone, and then Barry turned things over to me, which was a big responsibility, to say the least!

I wanted to keep the panel discussion more informal and intimate in nature, as opposed to the intense academic discussions witnessed at the Hofstra symposium. I had basic, general questions for our guests which I thought would (hopefully) be of interest to everyone, both dyed in the wool and casual Crosby fans. Barry told us about the *Bing Swings Whilst Bregman Swings* album, and how it came about as a result of his friendship with Gary. He told how he went on to head Verve Records and actually knew Kathryn Crosby before she married Bing. He discussed the "A Little Bit of Irish" TV special he worked on with Kathryn and Bing in Ireland and he also told us that as a young boy, he was in the Decca studios March 25, 1947 and witnessed the one and only historic recording session pairing Bing with Al Jolson, a session that produced the million seller "Alexander's Ragtime Band".

Mrs. Crosby, as always, was charming, and handled things with ease, reading passages from her book, including the story of Bing "doing the high jump" over some shrubbery and falling short of clearing them. For those of you who have no idea what I'm talking about, you need to buy "My Last Years With Bing"! She brought us up to date on what the Crosby's are doing these days. As for herself, Mrs. Crosby was in rehearsals for a local San Francisco theater production of the classic musical *Roberta*.

Following a half hour intermission, we screened the film I had prepared. The audience especially loved the Bing/Louis Armstrong pairing of "Now You Has Jazz" from the Edsel show, as well as Bing, Frank, and Dean performing "The Oldest Established Floating Crap Game In New York", from Bing's 1964 CBS-tv special, and of course, Bing & Kathryn's duet on "Dream" from the same. We closed with "When Irish Eyes Are Smiling", which closed the 1967 TV special for which Buddy had arranged the music.

After more discussion, the panel took questions from the audience. I was amazed at the cross section of people present; there was a rock musician (who looked the part) asking about how Bing warmed up or rehearsed, a young lady inquiring about where she could find the 'White Christmas' soundtrack album. Someone asked about how Bob and Dolores Hope are doing, with Bob himself just shy of his 100th birthday. Mrs. Crosby replied "Bob is upstairs in his room. I haven't seen him in about a year. I'm sure I could if I wanted to but I don't want to push the issue. Recently Dolores told him something good that happened in the family and he gripped her hand and said 'that's great', so he's still with us. Dolores at 94 beat me out of $11 two weeks ago playing gin rummy!" Whenever someone would ask her a question she couldn't answer, Mrs. Crosby would pat me on the back and say "ask our expert here", which, coming from her, is high praise indeed!

The program ended around 4:30pm, after which, Mrs. Crosby and Buddy resumed autographing books and records, which they had been doing between Noon and 1pm and during the intermission. By about 5:30, just about everyone was gone, so my Dad and I bid a fond farewell to Mrs. Crosby, Buddy Bregman and Barry Stapleton and headed back to West Bend, still smiling from what we had just witnessed. Incidentally, Mrs. Crosby had 42 copies of her book sent in for the event, and was down to the last box when the event ended, which was fantastic! Also, the local NBC-TV affiliate was there covering the event, and all of us appeared on the 10pm news that evening.

For those of you who have never been there, if you're ever in the Milwaukee area, you need to make an appointment with Barry to view the Irish Music Archives. I guarantee that if you're a Bing Crosby fan, you won't be disappointed! The Archives are located at 1532 Wauwatosa Avenue, Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53213. You can phone Barry at 414-476-8999 or e-mail him at barry@irishmusicarchive.com

Special thanks need to go out to Buddy Bregman, Kathryn Crosby, and, of course, Barry Stapleton who made this whole adventure possible. Through his tireless work and devotion to promoting Bing, Barry is without a doubt one of the best things that has happened to the world of Crosbyana in a long time.

In closing, I'd like to offer my own personal thanks to Kathryn Crosby for the many kindnesses she afforded my family and me during her visit to Wisconsin. She endeared herself to us all with her charm and grace, and for retaining the common touch, being completely devoid of any hint of ego. She gave my grandfather the greatest and most memorable birthday in his entire 87 years, and for that, the whole Van Beek clan is eternally grateful.

Greg Van Beek

(Editor: Jane Fitzgerald was the first to record her thoughts about the Milwaukee event on the Bing Crosby Internet Museum and this is what she had to say.)

Tired as I may be from the drive, I'm amazed that neither Greg nor Barry beat me to the punch here. Saturday's event at the Milwaukee Ward's Irish Music Archives was really wonderful. Much smaller than the conference at Hofstra, but much more intimate, too. I found myself sharing some of the same material — enjoying it still — and the opportunity to sit in a smaller auditorium, listening to Kathryn Crosby, Buddy Bregman and Greg Van Beek on a panel that was so much more accessible than that in the University setting. Kudos to Barry Stapleton for organizing and chairing the event, and to Greg Van Beek who sat on the panel and kept things moving with his questions and comments in a very skillful manner. Buddy Bregman was charming and gracious in his comments to and about Mrs. Crosby whom he related he had worked with before her marriage to Bing. Kathryn Crosby was warm and willing to share information that was presented in a much more intimate setting than had been possible at Hofstra. She talked about her children and what they are doing — possibly because no one had actually asked during the Long Island conference!

Greg (left) and Buddy Bregman (right) flank Kathryn Crosby

Nathaniel is about to remarry (he has four children from his first marriage and his intended has two), Mary Frances is married to an attorney, Mark Brodka, and they have two children, Benjamin, age 3 and 9 month old Christopher. Harry (an Investment Banker in New York) has no children and has recently become engaged to a doctor who is in medical research.

I must admit that I went to Milwaukee in part as a Crosby fan and in part as someone who is an active part in Cincinnati's Celtic Festival. I found the weekend captivating. Barry's/Ward's Music Archives Crosby collection is awesome, as is the building, the home of the best known Irish Festival in the country. It was great to see some familiar faces again, including Barry, Greg and Tom Van Beek, our buddy Buddy (who autographed my copy of "Bing Swings Whilst Bregman Swings"), and Kathryn Crosby, of course. In addition was Jon Oye and his lovely wife, Jane. Jon had made a gift of one of his wonderful Bing prints to Kathryn who thanked him publicly from the stage.

As I mentioned, it wasn't the scholarly, intensive affair that some of us experienced at Hofstra, but, happily, much more intimate and, for the time invested, every bit as enjoyable. Barry and Greg, you did a great job!

Jane Fitzgerald

(Editor: Sounds like a very nice event indeed and our thanks to Greg for his detailed report. Next, it's the turn of the Gonzaga tribute to be reviewed.)

Bing Crosby - A Celebration Of His Life, Spokane, May 16-18, 2003

The Centennial celebration at Gonzaga and your Editor was there!

Michael and Judy Crampton, Ken Shaw plus my wife Pat and I all made the long trip to Spokane together on May 14 and to say that we were tired on our arrival was an understatement after over 20 hours en route!

Thursday, May 15

Whilst the ladies shopped, I trapped Michael into visiting the Spokane Public library with me and we made some useful discoveries about Bing as you will read elsewhere in this issue. That night, we were invited to a preliminary showing of the new KSPS-TV documentary *Bing: Going My Way.* There was a reception beforehand and it was nice to meet Kathryn Crosby again plus Buddy Bregman, Will Friedwald, Howard Crosby and his brother Ed, Judy Schmid and many others. Eileen Bell-Garrison (Dean of Library Services at Gonzaga) formally welcomed everybody and handed over to Mary DeCesare and Jim Zimmer, the producers of the documentary. I was very impressed by the video (which will be reviewed more fully in our winter issue) and it was well received by the audience as well. Kathryn expressed her pleasure. With a narration by Rich Little, the documentary does an excellent job at looking at Bing's life with additional contributions from many of the celebrities who attended the Hofstra event. It also employed extracts from interviews with personalities originally seen in the 1987 PBS special. The programme was screened on PBS in the Spokane area a few days later. We hope to show the video at the UK branch's Leeds meeting in October.

Friday, May 16

During the morning, Michael Crampton and I visited

Bing's old home which is now known as the Crosby Alumni House and is part of the campus having originally been two blocks away when Bing lived there. Soon we were bumping into Crosby fans from all over the world, such as Sam Fleshman and Virgil Edwards from Oregon, and then our man in Australia, David Currington, whom I met for the first time.

We went into the Event Headquarters in the Crosby Student Center (the former Crosby library) to be met by the wonderful exhibition put together by Barry Stapleton, the director of the John J. Ward, Jr. Irish Music Archives in Milwaukee, which Greg Van Beek has already described in some depth. Adjacent to this was the separate Crosbyana Room which contained a major display of some of the University's Bing artefacts relating to his entertainment and business ventures and it would have been possible to have spent hours looking at these exhibitions. One item which caught my eye was a plaque from Remington Electric Shavers for "Music To Shave By", 'biggest recording of 1959, more than 6,000,000 pressed'. Amazing and something I had never realised.

In the Crosby Student Center, I bumped into Hobie & Cathie Wilson from Bing's Friends & Collectors Society and it was good to meet up at last with these loyal Crosby fans with whom I had corresponded for so long. Bing books and souvenirs were also on sale in the Center and the efficient staff were busy handing out the registration packs. The staff involved all had a specially produced red uniform which made them stand out from the rest of us.

In the afternoon, a tour of Spokane, with Crosby related highlights, had been arranged and we had a full coach load as we toured Bing's home town. We visited the sites of the Crosbys' first home in Sinto Avenue, Webster Grade School and the location of the former Peking Cafe before arriving at the old Clemmer Theater (now renamed) to find that we could not gain access. The key holder who had promised to be there had not turned up. Nothing daunted, our guide walked us into the Davenport Hotel which had been established in 1914 and where Bing performed with Al Rinker in 1926. The hotel is a very elegant place indeed and the celebrities who had been invited for the Bing event were all staying there. The tour continued to first Manito Park and then Downriver Golf Club (where Bing first became involved with the game). I judged that there was some feeling amongst the participants on the trip that there was too much Spokane and not enough Bing but overall it was a worthwhile excursion.

As we got back to our hotel room, it was just in time to see TV coverage of the Crosby event on the local CBS affiliate, KREM-TV, and who should come into view but Ron Field from Australia and Ben Weaver from Vancouver Island.

Opening Ceremonies - Crosby Bronze Statue

We hurried back to the campus for the rededication of Bing's statue. It was a chilly evening and we heard Gord Atkinson introduce Father Spitzer, the dynamic and energetic President of Gonzaga University, who welcomed us all, and then Spokane Mayor John Powers who read out a proclamation declaring that May 12 to May 18 would be Bing Crosby Week. Father Coughlin, who had been present when the statue was first unveiled in 1981, said a short prayer and then we were entertained by Rich Little, a Bing fan all his life. The ad-lib banter between Gord and Rich was most amusing. Kathryn Crosby came forward and kept her remarks short as she could see that the crowd was suffering from the windy and cold conditions. She then unveiled a plaque which had been placed on the statue to commemorate its' rededication.

Rich Little addresses the gathering.

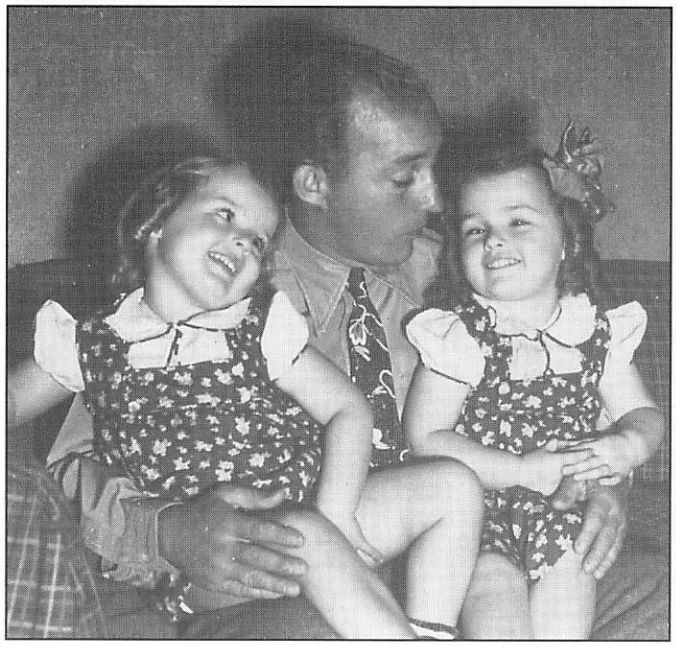
We all then repaired to the "Moonlight Becomes You" reception in the Foley Center Library where a multitude of items relating to Bing's personal life were on display. Many letters from Bing and his father to Ted Crosby had been loaned by Ted's son Howard and these were fascinating to read. One which caught my eye was dated November 5, 1945. From Elko, Bing writes to his brother Ted about the proposed reissue of Ted's book about Bing.

> "Dear Ted,
> I haven't sent you the foreword you requested for two reasons. First: I haven't been able to think of anything suitable or in good taste. Second: I think I should see what you have done with the material and find out what your publishing arrangements are before writing anything. I'm leaving here on the 21st for New York, and I'll be at the Waldorf from November 24.
>
> I wonder if you could find something out for me while you're in Washington. The army has a type of vehicle, described as a "Weapons Carrier" which would be most useful here on the ranch. Could you visit the offices of the Surplus Property Division, and find out for me where and how I can go about purchasing one of these cars? Naturally we want to get it as soon as possible and any reasonable price is agreeable.
>
> Save for a couple of short snow flurries we are having a beautiful Indian Summer here. Freezes every nite and warm sunshiny days. The deer are plentiful, very fat and highly edible this year. If the game warden ever came by I fear he'd hit us with the book. But after all, we must protect our range.
>
> I'm sorry to hear of your domestic estrangement. I'm in something of a spot myself, but there seems to be

nothing I can do about it. I don't know whether we Crosby's expect too much or give too little.
See you in New York."

Readers may recall that Bob Hope eventually wrote the foreword and by coincidence it's dated November 5, 1945. The book was published in April 1946.

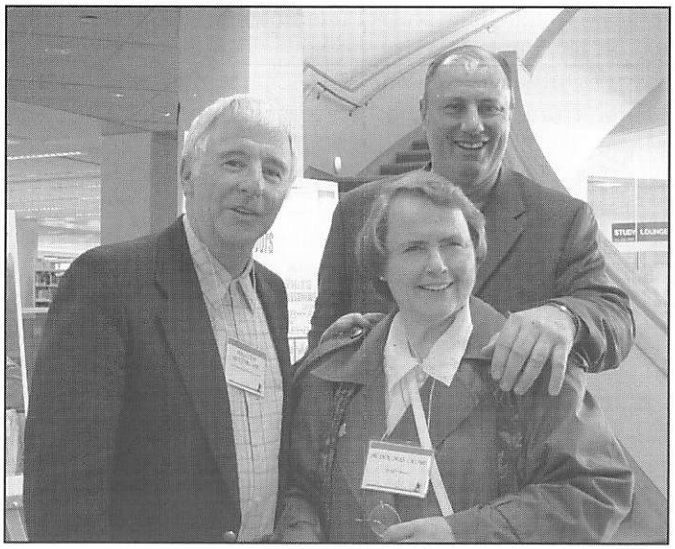
Ted had become estranged from his wife Hazel and this was the time when Bing was thought to have had matrimonial problems himself and to have become friendly with Joan Caulfield.



Bing with Ted's twin daughters in the late 1930s

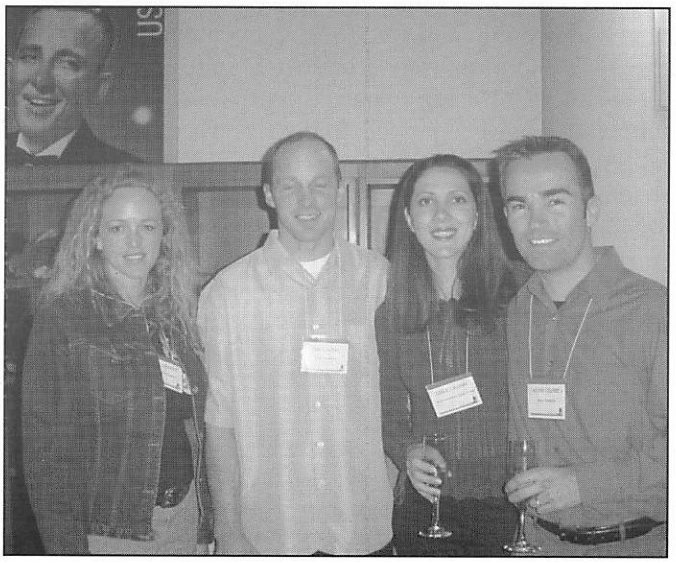
At the reception, I not only met Howard Crosby and his family again but also Ted's twin daughters from his first marriage, Catherine and Dolores (born May 18, 1934). When they were born, Ted wrote Bing "You have to have three of a kind to beat a pair of queens." When Bing's twin sons were born a month or two later, Bing cabled Ted "A pair of kings arrived today." Dolores (known as 'Dixie') became a nun and Catherine (known as 'Katie') married Bob Ferguson, who was accompanying her with their daughters Cathy and Colleen, and Katie's grandchildren, Ashley and Michael. Both twins are lively and entertaining company and Katie talked about how difficult it was for their mother after the separation from Ted. She will always be grateful to Bing because every Christmas for ten years after the split, her mother received a cheque for $300 from Bing which was a useful sum in those days and it really made a difference to them.

Phillip Crosby was not at the reception and I had spoken to him a week or two previously trying to encourage him to come. I had heard that Frank Sinatra's son was going to attend and it seemed very embarrassing if none of Bing's children were going to be there. Phillip clearly wanted to come but he said that his angina problems allied to severe difficulties with his back and teeth really precluded this. He had told me that his son, wearing a name badge saying 'Phil' (but his real name is Bing, although he has been known as 'Flip' since childhood after a friend Flip Kleffner) and his daughter Mary (children of Phillip's second wife, Joy) were going to be there as his representatives and it was with great pleasure that I met the two of them at the reception. Very nice people and as we chatted we came into the company of Kevin Crosby and his wife Leslie. Kevin, born in 1971, is the son of Lindsay Crosby and he obviously had great pride in his grandfather. He asked me to send him a copy of our magazine which I duly did. As with most families, there are many strands which have not met each other and to keep the Crosby family reunion going I brought Howard Crosby into our discussion. Howard is to keen to forge closer relationships within the family and he was a veritable tower of strength at Gonzaga in many ways.



Your Editor, with Sister Dolores as Howard Crosby watches over us

Other Crosby family members at the reception were Howard's wife Janice, their sons Samuel and James, daughters Eileen and Alice, Ed's wife Sandy and daughter Samantha, Mary Rose's daughter, Carolyn Schneider and Bob Crosby's daughter-in-law Deborah and his grandson Matthew.



(l to r) Mary Crosby, Flip Crosby, Leslie Crosby and Kevin Crosby.

That evening marked the birthday of Father Spitzer and also our Brazilian member Renato Failace (who had reached 70) and Kathryn Crosby led the singing of 'Happy Birthday'. Various celebrities were present and mingled easily with everyone and I spotted Rich Little, Ken Barnes, Gord Atkinson, Buddy Bregman, Gary Giddins, Bob DeFlores, Mozelle Seger, Will Friedwald and former BINGANG editor Priscilla Koernig as I circulated.

Saturday, May 17

A full programme of events had been drawn up. Michael Crampton and I started off at the Foley Center Teleconference Room for a film called "Take Gonzaga" which Bing had made in about 1960 to highlight the advantages of enrolling at Gonzaga University. He is seen talking to a prospective student on Downriver Golf Course and he then narrates the film which lasts about 30 minutes. Meanwhile the KSPS documentary was being shown in the Jepson Auditorium and we were in time to catch the final half of this. During the day, the University also showed the following at various locations on the campus:

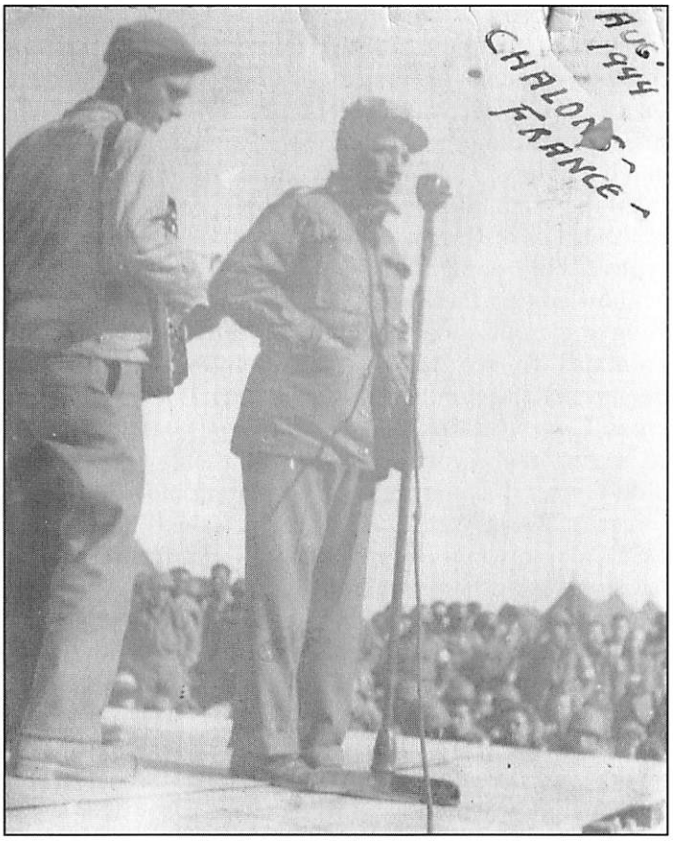
The Edsel Show, 'Going My Way', 'High Society', 'Holiday Inn', 'King of Jazz', 'Birth of the Blues', 'The Emperor Waltz' and 'Riding High'.

Next on our agenda was to go to the University Chapel to see the Kathryn Crosby presentation in which she talked about her book and sang to the very nice piano accompaniment of Buddy Bregman. Unfortunately I had to leave this early in order to fulfil my role as reporter of the whole event for BING magazine and catch some of the musical presentations in the Russell Theater by first Bob Pasch and then Howard Crosby. Bob is one of our members and his show 'A Tribute To Bing" has taken him all over the USA. He has a similarity to the older Bing in his delivery and his show, in which he is accompanied by pianist Steve Gold, links together many Bing songs and includes a nice video presentation culled together from Priscilla Koernig's cinefilm of Bing taken over many years.

Howard Crosby came on next accompanied by an excellent band. Howard sings in a very relaxed manner in a voice reminiscent of Peter Skellern who had a huge hit in the UK with "You're A Lady" in the 1970s. (See *Keeping Track* for news of a CD featuring Howard's singing.) Other musical presentations during the day were by Steve Mortier (a Spokane baritone), "Big Bing Theory" (a Gonzaga students ensemble) and "Pages of Harmony" (barbershop singers). Unfortunately I did not see these other acts although "Pages of Harmony" did an impromptu performance for me outside the Crosby Student Center and they were most impressive. Another singer on the campus was Roy Robinson, "The Casual Crooner", originally from Liverpool in the UK but now based in Canada, and Roy entertained the diners in the cafeteria in the COG building.

At 12 noon, Kathryn Crosby was available for a book signing and a huge queue soon formed in the Foley Center. Priscilla Koernig sat next to Kathryn to give her some company. Gord Atkinson was also in the Foley Center signing his *Crosby Years* CDs and I had the opportunity to talk to many ICC members there.

One man who was anxious to hand over some Bing photographs to the University was Neil Sarff, a Spokane resident, who had seen Bing in France during World War II. Neil (now 79) was a medic at the 103rd. Evacuation Hospital at Chalons in France and one hot afternoon in September, 1944, a show had been arranged for the patients. Neil described how a girl singer (presumably Jeannie Durrell) got him up on the stage and sang "All Of Me" to him. Neil was very embarrassed by this and he blushed as Jeannie put her arms around his waist. She asked him where he was from and he said "Tacoma" and that brought Bing out on to the stage to talk to him. Bing spoke to him about Tacoma and slapped him on the back but Neil said that he was too "rattled" to respond. Bing was wearing a fatigue jacket, GI fatigues and a wool hat on this hot day but he then opened his jacket to reveal a very loud shirt and argyle golf socks. Bing sang several songs including "Swinging On a Star" and he finished with "White Christmas". We have often read about how the singing of this would affect the troops and as Neil described it to me in Gonzaga nearly 60 years later he became quite emotional. He said that all of the audience were profoundly moved as Bing sang the song to them. Neil showed me some small photos that had been taken at the time and these were later handed over to the Curator of the Crosby Collection at Gonzaga and one of them is reproduced below. Neil requested a copy of our magazine and this is being despatched to him.



The first Gary Giddins lecture

At 1:30 p.m., we had the Gary Giddins lecture - "Bing the Technologist" and as always Gary was well worth hearing. Speaking easily and authoritatively, he discussed the age in which Bing was born and considered record cutting, microphones and how Bing as a baritone was more suited to records than tenors. Gary said that Bing was the first to sing romantic songs direct

to the listener and he traced his career pointing out that Bing became the king of new technology in records, radio and film. He mentioned Bing's relative lack of live appearances saying that Bing virtually disappeared into the technology and describing how Crosby's transcribed radio appearances supported by the introduction of magnetic tape dramatically aided the growth of the ABC network. Gary then went on to talk about the 1987 PBS special on Bing for which he had been extensively interviewed. It was a shock for him when he saw the documentary to find that his words were spoken by Dorothy Lamour and that he had all but finished up on the cutting room floor. At the end of his talk Gary took questions and inevitably he was asked about volume 2 of his tome about Bing. He smiled as he said, "It's writing itself back in New York while I'm here" humourously making the point that he can only do one thing at a time. As we know, he has a busy life as a jazz writer with the *Village Voice* but he hopes to create time to move ahead with the book later this year. In talking about other singers, Gary mentioned the nasal tones of Rudy Vallee and he was somewhat disparaging about Perry Como, saying "He couldn't swing if he was hanging from a tree". (Please don't write to BING magazine about that statement!)

A Celebrity panel discussion followed with **Lorne Harasen** (a Canadian broadcaster) acting as MC and doing a good job in keeping Ken Barnes, Gary Giddins, Gord Atkinson, Rich Little, Buddy Bregman and Will Friedwald to their allotted time. **Gord Atkinson** outlined details of his long association with Bing starting on the set of *Blue Skies* in 1945. **Ken Barnes** recounted his experiences in recording with Bing and Fred Astaire and could have happily have continued for much longer than the time allowed by the MC. **Will Friedwald** reminded us of Bing's influence on so many artists of all types. He compared Bing and Frank Sinatra, acknowledging that Frank had been very influenced by Bing at the outset of his career. Mr. Friedwald made the point that whilst Sinatra was very comfortable with open displays of emotion in song, Bing had a line he wouldn't cross. **Gary Giddins** talked about Bing's hair (or lack of it) saying that Crosby was one of the few stars who didn't wear his toupee when entertaining the armed forces in World War II. He mentioned the "Bing With a Beat" album when Bing was in imperial form and also the singalong albums where Bing was in great voice but "it was a pity that the choir didn't leave the stage." Buddy Bregman described his work on the album he did with Bing (two hours at Bing's home around the piano, plus the two recording sessions) and he went on to say that Bing was very caring about his sons. Buddy said that the negative comment about Bing was hogwash and in fact Buddy would have liked to have had Bing as a father. **Rich Little**, introduced as the "best impressionist in the World," came in last and described how he had asked Bing what it would take to get him on the Rich Little TV Show. Bing said, "Just pick up the phone" and so it all came about. Rich recalled how Bing had some trouble in speaking in an exaggerated 'Crosby' manner in a sketch on the show and Rich had to guide him in talking with a "B-b-b" in front of every word starting with a B. Overall, it was an absorbing session.

As we hastened to our rooms to change for the banquet, we were in time to see the daily KREM-TV coverage again and Raymond O'Toole (from Dublin), Cliff Brisbois (from California), Ron Field, Ben Weaver and me were briefly featured.

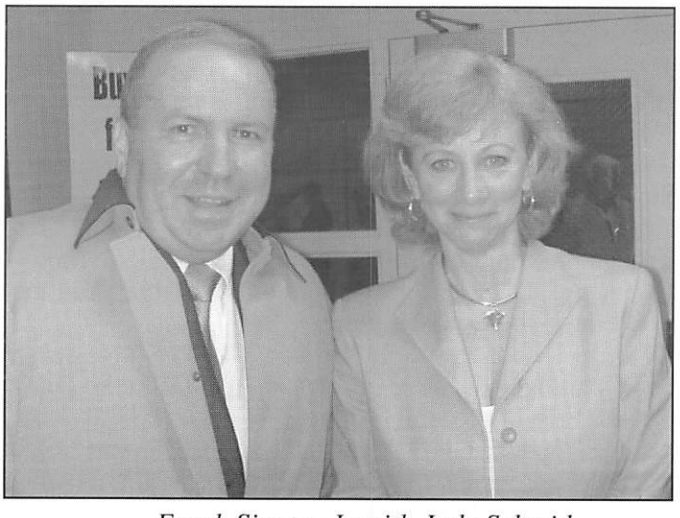
The Banquet

That night it was the "White Christmas Banquet" and 350 people sat down to an excellent meal in the Montana Room in the COG building. The University had employed professionals to decorate the room and a feature was a large screen with stills of Bing being projected on it throughout the evening. **Gord Atkinson** was in sparkling form as MC as he introduced Father Coughlin, Father Spitzer, and then me as the representative of the Crosby fan clubs. I reminded everyone present that it was early in 1998 that the ICC first canvassed the idea of a centennial celebration for Bing and that everyone felt that it should be at Gonzaga - the institution that helped make Bing the man he was. I continued:

> "I stand before you as a representative of the world-wide Crosbyana fan club movement which takes in Club Crosby (which incidentally is the oldest fan club in the world), the International Crosby Circle, Bing's Friends & Collectors Society and the Victorian Bing Crosby Society and it is a very real honour for me to express our sincere thanks to Gonzaga University, Father Spitzer, Eileen Bell-Garrison, Stephanie Plowman and the rest of the Blue Ribbon team for making this event happen. I must also commend Crosby fan Judy Schmid for all her hard work in conjunction with the University committee."

Mark Scrimger, President of Club Crosby could not attend the celebration but I was able to read extracts from a letter he had sent for the occasion and this drew warm applause. I finished by proposing a toast "To The Memory of Bing Crosby" and all those present rose to drink to Bing's memory. A heart-warming moment.

Rich Little came on next and had the audience in stitches with his routine as he gave us his impressions of Bing, Bob Hope, James Stewart, Ed Sullivan and many others. He finished with a marvellous imitation of George W. Bush which deservedly earned him a standing ovation.



Frank Sinatra Jr with Judy Schmid

Frank Sinatra Jr. was the next speaker. I didn't have the opportunity to meet Mr. Sinatra but I had heard in the past that he could be rather taciturn and dour as a companion. But what a joy he was as a speaker! Looking a lot like his famous father, Frank Jr. (age 59) spoke sincerely and easily without any notes at all. He told of his early memories of going to Bing's home to watch *The Legend of Sleepy Hollow* with Bing's sons, which incidentally he still considers as one of the finest bits of animation he has ever seen. He indicated that much had been said about the Bing the singer but not enough about Bing's acting ability. Frank said that Bing was a very fine actor and he recalled how during the making of *The Country Girl* he (Frank) had effectively had Grace Kelly as a baby-sitter during one meal he attended with his father and Bing. He told us about attending the 1956 *High Society* premiere in Hollywood and how there were spontaneous standing ovations at the end of four different songs in the film including of course the "Well Did You Evah" number. Mr. Sinatra offered the opinion that Bing and Peter Falk walked away with the honours for *Robin and the 7 Hoods* and then he told us about his own opening at the Cocoanut Grove. Frank received a good-luck telegram from Bing including the words, "This old room was kinda lucky for me." When Frank Sinatra was making *Come Blow Your Horn* in 1962, Frank Jr was talking to him in his dressing room about a programme he had seen in which it was stated that Al Jolson had been the greatest effective force in show-business up to that time. The older Sinatra quickly refuted this saying that it was Bing who deserved that accolade. Frank Jr said that "Bing was a great man" and he concluded by stating that he felt "like a visiting fireman" and if ever Bing's sons were to speak in Hoboken he knew how they would feel. This was a very nice tribute by Frank Sinatra's son and it was disappointing that none of Bing Crosby's children were present to hear it.

Gord Atkinson then played an extract from an interview he had with Bing and we heard Bing expressing his thanks to all his fans. **Father Spitzer** presented **Kathryn Crosby** with two plaques, one on behalf of Bing and one to her personally for all her work honouring Bing in her books. Kathryn replied appropriately and also thanked Frank Sinatra Jr for his kind words. She mentioned that Bing hated asking for favours but once when he was laid low with kidney stone problems, he had to pick up the phone to ask Frank Sinatra to deputise for him at a benefit for the San Francisco Opera. Mr. Sinatra willingly agreed to help and did a great job for which Bing was most grateful.

The proceedings were then handed over to **Howard Crosby** and his band who entertained with their versions of some of Bing's early songs. Overall it was a superb evening.

Sunday, May 18

At 8:30 a.m., a Mass was held in St. Aloysius Church whilst a nondenominational service was taking place in the University Chapel.

Michael Crampton and I had a 9:15 appointment to visit Stephanie Plowman, the Curator of the Crosby Collection, for a behind-the-scenes tour of the archives. I had had the opportunity of visiting the archives some years before but I particularly wanted Michael to have the same experience. He was obviously fascinated by the huge collection of AFRS recordings, rare records, paintings and books. Stephanie is a very patient guide and it was good of her to spare the time when she was so busy. During the weekend, Stephanie also showed Ken Barnes around the archives and the two of them are talking about a possible project to issue some of the recorded material stored there on CD.

Stephanie Plowman and Michael Crampton examine a 1972 painting of Bing by Anton Jovick

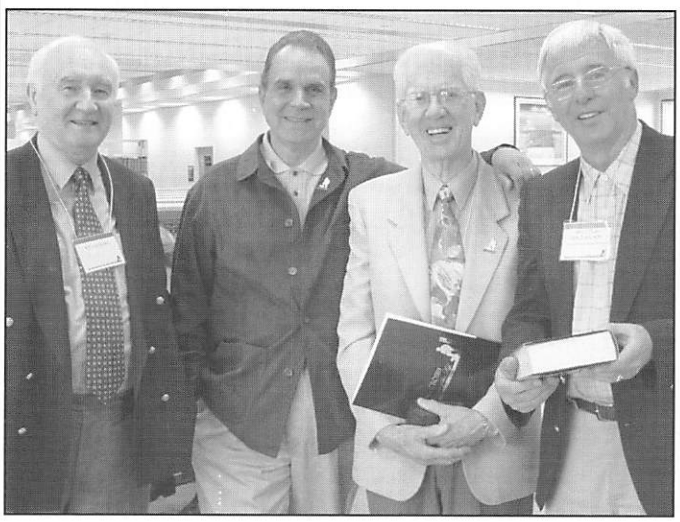
We hurried from the archives to the Jepson Auditorium to catch the end of an edited video of the original Crosby Statue dedication in 1981 and this was most entertaining. Gord Atkinson had introduced this and he then brought forward his friend Rich Little to present a video tribute to Bing which Rich had made just after Bing's death and which was syndicated throughout the USA and Canada. This was a most entertaining programme which employed excerpts from the 1976 *Rich Little Show* starring Bing and which had Bing miming to Rich Little's voice imitating Carol Channing! It also included Rich mimicking the "Well Did You Evah" duet from *High Society* and playing both participants through the use of split screens. Rich then showed us another video extract of Bing on the Merv Griffin Show in 1975 when Rich comes on to parody him. Bing can just be heard at the end saying to Canadian-born Rich "Did you get those threads in Toronto?".

The second Gary Giddins lecture

A short walk to the chapel was needed for another lecture by Gary Giddins "Bing the Catholic and Bing the Gonzagan". Gary was again impressive as he described *Going My Way* as a very deep film for its time and how many priests had admitted they entered the Church because they wanted to be like Father O'Malley. He talked about the religious guidance of Bing's mother, how Bing came to record "Silent Night" and "Adeste Fideles" and started the fashion for Christmas songs with "White Christmas". Bing's concern about playing a priest was also considered by Gary who pointed out that

Bing was probably the only star to have had a classical education. It was thought that Bing was a B+ student at Gonzaga. Gary digressed into talking about Bing's early performances with Al Rinker when they used to sing 'In A Little Spanish Town'. This had been a big hit for Paul Whiteman with Jack Fulton doing the vocal. When Bing and Al Rinker joined the Whiteman aggregation, the great man gave them 'In A Little Spanish Town' to sing, taking it away from Fulton. Gary had interviewed Jack Fulton when he was in his 90s and he was still upset about losing the song to Bing and Al! The lecture took place in the chapel and Gary reminded us that Bing had sung there as a youth. Bing channelled money to Gonzaga from the Edsel TV Show which was 'produced' by the University in order to get funds to them in a tax efficient way. Gary also said that some money came from the 1956 version of *Anything Goes*, a film which Gary described as "a mess" laying the blame on the director.

The next highlight was a book signing by Gary Giddins with Buddy Bregman autographing his CDs and me in a subsidiary role endorsing copies of my book. During the day, the University was showing the BBC documentary "Bing On Bing", the films "Here Comes The Groom", "White Christmas", "The Bells of St. Mary's", The Country Girl", "Road To Morocco", "Road to Utopia" and "We're Not Dressing" at various locations. The musical entertainment was also underway again in the Russell Theater.



(l to r) Ken Barnes, Rich Little, Gord Atkinson and Malcolm Macfarlane

At 1:30 p.m., I returned to the Jepson Auditorium to see **Bob DeFlores** present a selection of video clips. I think that this was more or less the same presentation Bob delivered at Hofstra but it was well worth seeing the rare clips from "Two Plus Fours", "Please" and many others again. The screen test Bing did as Will Rogers fascinated the audience and sitting next to Rich Little, it was amazing to hear Rich quickly identify all the bit part actors. I had the opportunity of seeing Rich in Las Vegas a week or two later and Pat and I spent a wonderful evening with him and Marie. Rich must be the champion old-film buff in the world and any conversation about films with him is enriched by his ability to mimic the voices and perform whole sections of the dialogue. He is very knowledgeable about British films too and his impressions of Jack Hawkins, James Mason, Michael Rennie and even Roger Livesey are remarkable. It's been quite a while since I heard the immortal words 'Gort, Klaatu Barada Nikto' which came from a 1951 film. Anyone know which one? Rich also 'does' Ken Barnes and Gord Atkinson quite well too!

Reverting to Bob DeFlores, I was delighted to learn that Bob is working with Kathryn Crosby to restore many of the films and videos in Kathryn's basement. Bob mentioned to me that the films included shorts which he had never heard of before. An article about Bob by James Proescholdt in the *Minneapolis - Sun* newspaper of March 27 included the following:

> In addition to supplying films in his possession, DeFlores tries to locate and restore rare and deteriorating film. He said that a lot of earlier films were destroyed by the studios that thought they wouldn't need them again. "Universal burned 400 films in 1947," he said. "They're sorry they did it now with the video market."
>
> "I hunt all over the country looking for rare films. You usually find them in private collections," said DeFlores. He said that many films he finds are in bad condition. He cleans and repairs what films he can, but sometimes the films are what preservationists call "vinegar." Left in cans for years with no air, films begin destroying themselves in a process that emits a vinegar-like smell.
>
> Such is the case with DeFlores' recent project preserving the home movies of Bing Crosby. DeFlores met Crosby's widow, Kathryn, who gave him permission to sift through their basement full of old home movies and films. Some of the movies are in peak condition; some are not so good. Kathryn Crosby hired DeFlores to preserve and compile the movies in honor of Bing's 100th birthday on May 3. DeFlores imparts that this is a weighty project: "The Crosby collection has got to be at least 3,000 to 4,000 films," he said. These films include "Hollywood Palace" shows, "Bing Crosby Show" episodes, short subjects, home movies and even golf footage. "Not all of it needs restoration, but I have to go through all of it to see if it does," he said.

Stephanie Plowman followed Bob with a presentation about the "Bing Crosby collection at Gonzaga" and it was very interesting to learn about the growth of the collection and the special work which has to be done to ensure that it does not deteriorate. Stephanie illustrated her talk with many slides of rare pictures of Bing.

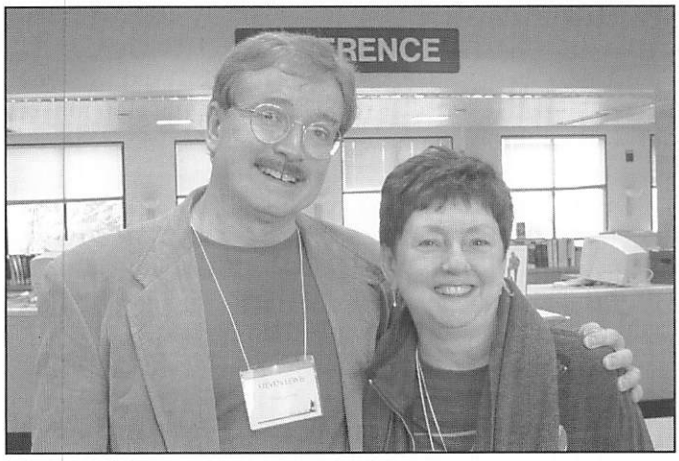
Family and Friends Panel Discussion

The final event of the weekend was a Family and Friends Panel Discussion and this was emceed again by Lorne Harasen. The panel comprised Kathryn Crosby, Howard Crosby, Mozelle Seger, Buddy Bregman, Rich Little and Carolyn Schneider (the daughter of Bing's sister, Mary Rose). Steven Crosby (Gary's son) was scheduled to be there but had to withdraw at the last moment.

Howard Crosby talked about the feud between his father Ted and Bing and how it came to be settled. He

said that Bing and his sister Kay were very alike but Kay was independent and never traded on the Crosby name. She would even deny that she was related to Bing at times. When she died in 1974, Bing was shocked as he didn't even know she was sick and he would have given any help needed to get her the best possible medical treatment. Conversely, Bing's sister Mary Rose, who was not like Bing at all, revelled in Bing's fame and proudly told everyone about him. Howard said that Bing's screen persona seemed to be based on Bing's father and Kathryn agreed with this suggestion.

Buddy Bregman frankly admitted that he did not know Bing that well. He knew Bing's sons by his first marriage and for a while Gary was his best friend. Gary could be very amusing at times and he called Buddy "Funky Buddy". Gary and Buddy were together when they came across Eddie Fisher and Elizabeth Taylor in an amorous embrace in a car before their relationship became known. Buddy said that he saw no animosity between Bing and his sons and he was often aware of the caring side of Bing. In later questioning, Buddy was asked by our own Steven Lewis for his reaction to Gary's book "Going My Own Way". Buddy said that he wasn't close to Gary at that time and that Gary was at a low part in his life.



Steven Lewis gets to know Jane Fitzgerald!

Mozelle Seger delivered the paper she had presented earlier at Leeds and Hofstra. She talked about Basil Grillo (Bing's business manager) and remarked how easy he was to work with. Buddy Bregman added that he too found Basil to be "a great man and very nice."

Carolyn Schneider remembered how Bing had been very supportive towards her. He arranged a screen test at Paramount for her and arising from this she was on contract for a year or so and lived in Bing's home during that time. She remembered Bing whistling a lot. Carolyn spoke well of her Crosby grandparents and we gained the opinion that she was quite a comedienne at one time. She had appeared on the Bob Crosby show and her mother then arranged for all her friends to write fan mail to the radio station. When Carolyn was in hospital having a baby, Bing telephoned to see how she was much to the amazement of the nurses. Carolyn also mentioned the kindness our stalwart member George O'Reilly to her when she visited Dublin.

Kathryn Crosby was introduced by the admirable Lorne Harasen with the words that "the weekend would have been hollow without her." This was absolutely true. Kathryn attended everything, she was approachable to all and supportive of everyone. I marvelled at her stamina and her ability to stay pleasant and affable. Her long time friend, Ginny, who accompanied her told me that she had known Kathryn for 25 years and had never heard her say a bad word about anyone. Kathryn said that Bing was very good at keeping a secret and that she knew nothing about his first marriage at all. At one stage, she spoke Russian and we were all surprised when Lorne Harasen answered her in the same tongue. Apparently as a small child, a friend of his had been Russian and he had learned a fair bit of the language from him. Kathryn and Lorne conversed for a moment or two in Russian to our bemusement.

Rich Little joked that he had never met Bing and didn't like him which certainly got our attention before he became serious again and went on to talk about some of his times with Bing, whom he deeply admired. He observed that Bing could ad-lib in songs but still know where he was musically. Frank Sinatra was the same. Rich suggested that Bing must have been born singing

The questioning from the floor seemed to get bogged down in trivia such as the type of tobacco smoked by Bing, leading Rich to retort that "We shall be talking about his brand of toothpaste next." Overall, the panel was probably one of the weaker events of the Celebration but nevertheless it was interesting in parts. At the conclusion around 5 p.m., Father Spitzer came forward to wind up the proceedings saying that it is "the living spirit of Bing which pulls us all together." He finished by saying "Let's stay reconnected" and he talked of possibly repeating some kind of event every 5 years.

Overview

This was a very appropriate and well organised celebration of Bing's centennial. Much thought and a lot of hard work went into the event and we owe a huge debt of gratitude to the University especially Eileen Bell-Garrison and Stephanie Plowman who probably shouldered much of the direct responsibility. Kathryn Crosby, Rich Little, Gary Giddins, Howard Crosby and Gord Atkinson were the major players throughout with valuable contributions from all of the other celebrities. I understand that about 650 people attended in all which was very pleasing. To hear Bing's voice booming out from the rooftops all over the Gonzaga campus during the whole weekend was wonderful in itself.

The regional media coverage was very good and there were excellent articles in the Spokane *Spokesman-Review* by Jim Kershner and the *Seattle Times* by Beth Kaiman. I was not aware of any national TV coverage.

It was surprising that none of Bing's children were there. We know Phillip's reasons and Jane Fitzgerald has already outlined the recent developments in the lives of the children of the second marriage. Perhaps the Crosbys aren't comfortable at fan gatherings (Bing himself wouldn't have been) or perhaps there are some personality problems within the family? However, Nathaniel has had some nice things to say about his father as you will read elsewhere in BING and Steven

Crosby (Gary's son) has been making some valid points too. Harry Crosby attended a tribute in New York which Martin McQuade reports on later in the magazine so the family aren't disinterested.

I met so many Bing friends at Gonzaga - too many to mention individually - and it was a wonderful experience for everyone who attended. We must do our best to keep the celebrations going until 2004 when most reference sources still say that it will be Bing's centenary. A suggestion has been made that we should hold an event in Dublin, Ireland next May and this is being considered in conjunction with George O'Reilly, who incidentally is now feeling a lot better following some health problems earlier in the year.

Malcolm Macfarlane

On Saturday, May 3, 2003, the SEATTLE POST-INTELLIGENCER had a nice article by Gene Stout, their pop music critic which contained some pertinent remarks by Steven Crosby and we reproduce some of this with grateful thanks to the paper.

Bing Crosby: Remembering Washington State's biggest star

He was the biggest music star ever produced by Washington state. And his name wasn't Jimi Hendrix. Or Kurt Cobain. Or Quincy Jones.

Clue: He was the biggest movie star ever produced by Washington state.

If you're under 50, just admit defeat.

The rest of you, of course, know the answer.

Bing Crosby.

The pipe-smoking singer-actor with the easygoing manner and distinctive baritone was an American icon who enjoyed unprecedented stardom in the first half of the 20th century.

"Bing had more No. 1 records than anybody and was on the charts longer," Steven Crosby, Bing's 48-year-old grandson, said this week. "The generation behind me doesn't really know that, and the generation ahead of me forgets it."

They also forget he was a huge movie star, ranking as Hollywood's top box office draw for the four years from 1944 to 1947, and finishing as one of the top 10 box office attractions 15 times between 1934 and 1952. He was nominated for best actor Oscars three times, winning the Academy Award for "Going My Way," the best picture Oscar winner in 1944.

Steven Crosby, vice president of corporate communications at Vulcan, Paul Allen's Seattle-based development company, is one of dozens of Crosby family members, friends, admirers and former associates marking the Bing Crosby centennial this month at Gonzaga University in Spokane, his grandfather's alma mater.

Today would have been the singer's 100th birthday. Born in 1903 in Tacoma, Harry Lillis "Bing" Crosby grew up in Spokane and later launched his career in Los Angeles after rising from college minstrel shows to popular orchestras. In 1930, he made his film debut with the Rhythm Boys in bandleader Paul Whiteman's "The King of Jazz." . . .

"He brought a sense of calm through a sea of tough times back in the '30s, '40s and '50s," Steven Crosby said.

Long before he became the grandfatherly elder statesman of American popular music and film — hosting golf tournaments and hawking orange juice in TV ads — Crosby was the king of cool.

"The thing you have to understand about Bing Crosby is that he was the first hip white person born in the United States," said band leader Artie Shaw. . .

Steven Crosby concedes that in recent years his grandfather hasn't always received the recognition he deserves.

"If you want to lay the blame on anybody, I'd say it's us as a family," he said. "We haven't promoted him the way the Sinatra family has promoted Frank Sinatra and Priscilla Presley has promoted Elvis."

Steven, who grew up in Beverly Hills, is the son of the late Gary Crosby, Bing's oldest son. Gary's 1983 book, "Going My Own Way," was a sensational, unflattering biography of Bing that revealed a darker side of the famous singer and actor. It also reflected Gary's difficult childhood.

"This was one man's view of his life. And this one man, whom I loved dearly, struggled with alcoholism and worked through a lot of demons in his life," Steven said.

"You've got to keep in mind that he was the oldest son of an Irish father who was one of the most sought-after people in the world. My dad had some tough times with his father, and I think his father did the best he could raising four very strong-willed boys."

Steven Crosby's own relationship with Bing was far more genial.

"I went to Santa Clara University, a private Jesuit college in the San Jose/Santa Clara area," he said. "My four years of college were the last four years of his life."

He recalled visiting his grandfather in Hillsboro, Calif., and attending the Bing Crosby golf tournaments, for which Olympia Beer was a sponsor. "He wasn't a beer drinker, so he had all these cases of beer at his house, and guess who got to take all that beer back to college?"

During Steven's last year in college, his grandfather agreed to perform at the college fund-raiser, along with Rosemary Clooney and other luminaries. The event was in February 1977. Bing died just a few months later, in October.

"He put on an amazing show. I think that was his way of paying me back for going to college — because he really wanted his oldest grandson to go to college and actually go on to graduate studies. And I followed through on my commitment."

MOHAI CELEBRATES CROSBY

As part this month's centennial activities, the Radio Enthusiasts of Puget Sound are offering a "Bing Centennial" event featuring radio veteran and Crosby

expert John Jensen, who will share his memories of the star, as well as radio show excerpts, music, movie clips and interviews today at 3 p.m. at the Museum of History and Industry. The event is free with regular MOHAI admission, but traffic may be heavy around the museum because of Opening Day for boating season.

Gene Stout

(Editor: Well done, Steven Crosby. Some good mature comments which help to promote Bing's image. I included the mention about the Mohai event as I had the pleasure of meeting John Jensen at Gonzaga. John was the producer behind a radio show Bing did at Treasure Island in 1975 and he is arranging to join the ICC.

I also mentioned Nathaniel and he featured usefully in an article by Tom Callahan in the May edition of 'Golf Digest'. We are reproducing extracts with acknowledgements to the magazine concerned.)

The Bing Dynasty

On the 100th anniversary of Crosby's birth, we celebrate the granddaddy of celebrity golf.

"That was a great game of golf, fellas."— Bing Crosby's last words

One hundred years ago this month, 26 days and 5,000 miles apart, Leslie Townes Hope and Harry Lillis Crosby were born. Hope-and-Crosby. Not only when it came to golf, but especially in that sense, they were one. At the greening of the game, the great gardeners were Bobby Jones, Dwight Eisenhower, Arnold Palmer and Hope-and-Crosby. This was history's indispensable foursome. Representing a kind of Grand Slam of their own, they were the ones who cultivated golf in America.

Who was older? Bob or Bing?

"Each one said the other was older," says Kathryn Crosby, Bing's widow. "Older and fatter, and a worse golfer."

In fact, Crosby was older — May 3 to May 29 — but Hope never knew it. And, now that he comes to his own centennial, bed-ridden in Southern California, Bob is probably unaware that he won the argument. By the evidence of a Washington state baptismal certificate, Bing's long-professed birth date (1904 in most of the annals) has recently been corrected to 1903. "Part of my life," Hope once said, "went with Bing."

In a decidedly mixed blessing, Hope has survived his friend by more than a quarter of a century. Walking off a Spanish golf course near Madrid, after shooting 85 and winning a $10 bet, Crosby had a heart attack and died. He was 74. It was Oct. 14, 1977, a surprising date to me.

"I never play golf after the shooting season opens in October," Crosby told Jack Murphy and me a few years earlier in a house above the 13th fairway at Pebble Beach. Bing's winter pro-am, the famous "Clambake" without clams, was about to reconvene. "October is the time for the ducks and the quail and the pheasants," he said, "and for getting reacquainted with your dog."

Murphy, the elegant sports editor of *The San Diego Union*, had invited me to share his appointment with Crosby, who was mostly genial but slightly odd. Bing alternated between amazing loquacity and uncomfortable silence, puffing on his pipe and staring out the window. He may have been afraid that one of us was about to hit him up for a spot in the tournament, his constant fear.

"Pebble Beach is the Louvre," he said. "It isn't just the Louvre, it's everything in the Louvre, too, with all of the artists gathered round." Bing didn't care for Hope's snappier description — "Alcatraz with grass" — but he nearly smiled when Murphy quoted Olympic swimmer and Tarzan portrayer Johnny Weissmuller, one of the amateur celebrities, saying, "I've never been so wet in all my life."

More than just a vocabulary filled with $2.50 words, Bing effectively had his own language, delivered in that familiar boo boo boo patois of Father Chuck O'Malley. For instance, discussing Bing's Del Mar racetrack (headquarters of another of his sporting passions), even poets are usually satisfied with the phrase "where the turf meets the surf." But Crosby called it "that pretty little horse hippodrome by the sea."

Parties were "soirees," and drinks were "toddies." He described the most devoted drinkers (see: Phil Harris, "the pro from the Jack Daniels Country Club") as "bibulous." "Crosby weather," part of our vernacular, didn't cover the meteorology of the matter nearly well enough for Bing. To him, Carmel's perennial, if not annual, cloudbursts were "ring-tailed twisters" that required the spectators not just to don boots and long johns but to break out their "mukluks" and "balbriggans." I liked L.A. columnist Jim Murray's line, but Bing made a face when I repeated it. Playing off the Hope-and-Crosby "Road" pictures, Jim dubbed Bing's tournament, "The Road to Pneumonia."

In Crosby-speak, if you were in a bunker, you were "in the loge." Jack Lemmon wasn't swinging a golf club. He was "basting a turkey." Of course, Lemmon was more at home in "shooting galleries" (movie theaters). And, if Bing didn't quite get what you had just said, he announced, "I'm playing infield here."

It was a little challenging to converse with him, but fun.

Crosby and Murphy had black Labrador retrievers in common. Jack's was a whiskery old fellow named Abe of Spoon River, certainly the only dog in the world that munched cheese balls and fetched readers. Bing's Lab was called Remus. Short for, in a far less politically correct time, "Uncle Remus."

"I suppose in every man's life," Kathryn says, "he gets the dog that he loves so much. When Bing and I were married about five or six or seven months, we went to the ranch, the Elko Ranch [Nevada], and there was a new litter of pups. Remus was the special one. Bing worked him and trained him and went hunting with him always at the duck club. He was just his best companion and friend."

Remus had a profound influence on Crosby's stewardship at Pebble Beach.

"You know, I think Remus is the reason we sold the place at Pebble," Kathryn says. "When the children were very very small, Remus got in the surf right across the

fairway from the house. It was hard for him to get out. And, you know, Labs are water dogs. Bing worried that, if Remus was having a difficult time, the kids were in danger. So we sold the house."

The tournament traces to 1947 on the Monterey Peninsula. But it goes back to 1937 at the Rancho Santa Fe Golf Club, near San Diego, where Sam Snead won the original $500 first prize and insisted on cash. Clark Gable, Fred Astaire and Randolph Scott were among the drowned amateurs (prophetically, the inaugural round of the Rancho Santa Fe Amateur-Pro was washed out). After the rain stopped, everyone repaired to a barbecue soiree under the pepper trees on Bing's ranch.

Reportedly, pro Toney Penna was the one who put the bug in Crosby's ear. But Bing was the man who invented pro-ams. A year before, 1936, he won the first of five club championships at Lakeside in North Hollywood, an industry course where actors, directors and film technicians dominated and, to the annoyed growls of W.C. Fields, Howard Hughes walked Jean Harlow down the fairway.

"I played a little as a kid in Spokane," Crosby said. "Caddied some. But I don't suppose I played seriously until I came down to California and got into vaudeville in 1925."

Meanwhile, Hope, a prize fighter in his youth (his ring name, "Packy East," stayed his identity on little gold locker-room plates all over the world), didn't tumble to golf until around 1930, also during vaudeville days. On a boring afternoon in Seattle, several partners on the bill, the Diamond Brothers, came clattering through the lobby wrangling their clubs. They invited Bob to trail along. A couple of years later, Hope and Crosby met for the first time on the street outside New York's Friars Club. Pretty soon they were improvising an act at the Capitol Theater and "between shows [Hope told Dwayne Netland in *Confessions of a Hooker*], we'd go over to Alex Morrison's driving range under the 59th Street Bridge and hit balls. That was the genesis of a close friendship that endured 45 years."

Bob said, "I liked Bing right away. At the studio or the golf course, he made me feel comfortable from the start. Bing was always a little better than I: a 2-handicapper. At my best, I was a 4. But, mostly, I was a 6. Bing took the game seriously. I liked to play it for laughs, but he worked hard on his swing. On the picture sets, whenever we had a break, he would ask, 'How long?' Then he'd head over to Wilshire Country Club, 10 minutes away, and hit balls until they called him back. Finally the producers partitioned off a part of the set and installed a net so we could practice. We almost killed off a couple of cameramen."

Crosby said, "I may have been a bit better than Hope, but he was a better bettor."

Both were competent enough at the game to sign up for a British Amateur, Bing at St. Andrews in 1950, Bob in Wales the following summer. (Crosby actually qualified for a U.S. Amateur.)

"I filed an entry for the British," Bing recalled, "but at the time of the tournament I was enjoying myself in France and I really didn't intend to compete. At the last minute, I changed my mind and crossed the Channel. My arrival on the first day of the tournament, without a practice round, annoyed the local press. They felt I was not taking the event very seriously."

His opponent was a Scot named Wilson. They attracted quite a following.

"Most of the spectators came to see an actor hacking it around," Bing said. "Well, I opened with a birdie, which raised a few eyebrows. Then I birdied the next hole, followed with a par, then birdied two more holes. By this time, the gallery was really getting excited. Then I shanked a shot and, of course, pretty soon I was shanking the thing regularly, and Wilson finally beat me, 2 and 1."

Even shanks, Crosby could recount with a lilt. "For me, golf has been a kind of passport," he said, "to relaxation, and to happiness."

Kathryn says, "He was a wonderful sport. He loved all of the good things about the game. They tell you to swing to your favorite waltz, and nobody had more waltzes to choose from. Do you know how much golf meant to him? One time, I was on tour with our daughter, Mary Frances [who later shot J.R.]. We were doing a play in Texas called 'The Latest Mrs. Adams,' and Bing called to say, 'This is the happiest day of my life.'

"'Oh, what happened, darling?' I asked, and he said, 'Nathaniel has just won the men's club championship at the Burlingame Country Club.' That was Bing's happiest day. Not the songs or the films or any of his show business successes. Not our wedding. Not the birth of his little girl. The fact that his teenage son had become the men's champion at the Burlingame Country Club."

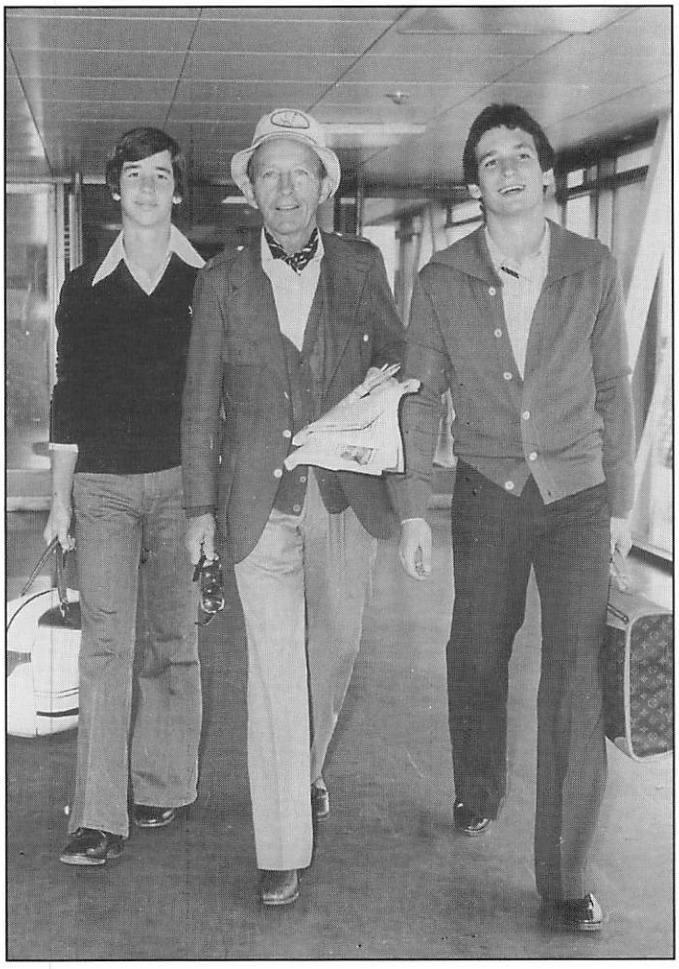
Four years after Bing died, Nathaniel followed John Cook, Mark O'Meara and Hal Sutton as the U.S. Amateur champion of 1981. In the gallery, Kathryn wore Bing's hat.

"When I was playing junior golf," Nathaniel says, "Dad would follow me for a couple of holes, just to let me know he was there. Then he'd disappear, so as not to upstage me. He'd sneak from tree to tree, thinking I couldn't see him. Or he'd watch from two or three fairways over, through binoculars. He'd have on a Sherlock Holmes hat and sunglasses. Nobody knew who the heck he was. He loved going incognito. We'd sneak in and out of 49er games, just he and I. We'd go to every single Pirates game at Candlestick Park. [In Bingle-lingo, Candlestick was "The Cave of the Winds."] He had a piece of the Pirates, and he'd fix it so I could sit on the bench in full uniform. He did so many things out of his way to make my childhood special."

As members of Crosby's second family, though, hadn't Harry, Mary Frances and Nathaniel been rather lucky to catch the grandfatherly Bing? Didn't first wife Dixie and their four rebellious boys practically set records for personal wreckage and self-destruction?

"Grandfatherly?" Nathaniel repeats the word, mulling it over. "No. He was very much our dad. He gave me a great deal of one-on-one time that I cherish. We played in a lot of twosomes around all of the courses he loved in Southern California. You know, at Bel-Air and places like that, he won about 15 club championships in his day. His frustration in life was not getting into the L.A. Country Club when we lived on it."

Bing's youngest son doesn't deny his father was a



Nathaniel (left) with his father and brother in 1976.

disciplinarian. With one sentence in a memorable Barbara Walters interview five months before his death, Crosby chilled the airwaves almost to freezing:

WALTERS: Suppose one of your sons came home and said, "Dad, I've got this girl, and do you mind if we share a room here in the house?"

CROSBY: In our house? No chance!

WALTERS: It happens in other families.

CROSBY: Well, it wouldn't happen in my family. If any one of them did that, I wouldn't speak to them ever again.

WALTERS: Ever again?

CROSBY: Ever again!

WALTERS: Do you mean that if one of your sons came home and said, "I like this girl and I'm living with her and we're not married," you would never speak to him again?

CROSBY: Aloha on a steel guitar.

"Sure, he believed in discipline," Nathaniel says, "but you have to factor in the time of things. It's very easy for people of this generation to jump up and say, 'I was abused.' Most of that stuff about my father comes from the negative publicity that surrounded Gary Crosby's book. It was promoted as a Daddy Dearest. Gary wanted the money. But, back in my dad's youth in Spokane, you had Catholic schools and Catholic upbringing, and that sometimes involved being spanked with a belt. The nuns did it, the priests did it, everybody did it, and my dad went to parochial schools, Jesuit schools. But, I can tell you, he was not a tyrant. He was a gentle man."

At 16, Nathaniel took custody of the Crosby and tried to run the tournament exactly as his father would. But then nobody but Bing could meet a young American Indian on an airplane, get to talking golf and end up inviting him to play. All of the amateurs, celebrities or not, paid the entry fee — Bing insisted on it — except that kid.

Sixty-five years ahead of her time, Babe Didrikson competed in the Crosby as a pro, partnered with her amateur husband, wrestler George Zaharias. As late as 1974, Bing was still trying to coax the PGA Tour into including a few women professionals, for spice. Nancy Lopez played in the Crosby as an amateur. So did a lot of eventual winners, from Gene Littler to Mark O'Meara. George Archer caddied in it as a boy and won it as a man.

When commercialism had finished overwhelming the Crosby, turning it irrevocably into the AT&T, Kathryn shifted the Clambake part to Winston-Salem for a while, long enough to make millions for the winning amateurs' personal charities. "You should have seen all of those CEOs," she says, "fighting it out, tooth and nail, so they could give $5,000 to their favorite cause."

Nathaniel has a dream of a smaller Crosby, perhaps involving just the Palmers and Nicklauses, just the cream of the industrial moguls, just the A-list of the celebrities, maybe back in Rancho Santa Fe. "It's important to me to get Dad's name out there a little bit more," he says. "It's been 25 years since he died. It would be sad if future generations didn't know who he was."

As long as there are white Christmases, is there any chance of that? (On the other hand, is there any way to erase the memory of David Bowie and Bing Crosby murdering the Little Drummer Boy?)

Nathaniel didn't play in this year's AT&T Pebble Beach National Pro-Am. Neither did brother Harry, who was pictured in the program along with Peter Ueberroth and the other directors of the Monterey Peninsula Foundation. Neither did Clint Eastwood, the chairman of the board. On a shiny week that eliminated any need for mukluks and balbriggans, Pebble Beach was emphatically still the Louvre, but all of the artists weren't gathered round . Only five of the top 20 pros were there and, while it may not be fair to call Kevin Costner, Bill Murray, Ray Romano, Kevin James, James Woods and Bill Devane the B-list, who wouldn't trade the lot of them for Dean Martin, James Garner, Fred MacMurray and Bob Hope? (Frankly, I'd take Guy Kibbee for Romano and William Frawley for the rest.)

Scarcer and scarcer are the Crosby leftovers, like Roger Maltbie. "I remember back in '75 or '76," Maltbie said, walking off Pebble's 18th green on Friday. "I was playing well, in one of the last groups, but a breeze came up the final day and I completely choked. Then I heard this familiar voice from off to the side.

'That's OK, young man, boo boo boo, you're going to be just fine.'"

Glen Campbell said, "I did Bing's Christmas special in 1969. I remember standing offstage, just listening to

him sing. He was still so pure. It amazed me how pure he was. 'Come play in my Clambake,' he said."

On the eve of the 2003 tournament, Stanford radio voice Bob Murphy, who goes back to the old days, emceed a celebrity shootout that included Eastwood. Introducing Clint, Murphy commended him for "picking up the tournament and running with it," for "doing everything in his power to carry along the camaraderie," for "preserving the essence." Eastwood was touched. All of his 72 years are carved like tree rings in Clint's oaken face. But his eyes haven't aged at all. They're still full of mischief and optimism. They danced like Hope-and-Crosby on The Road To A Century. That was a great game of golf, fellas.

In the last line of the movie, George Archer says, "They can call it whatever they want. It will always be the Crosby to me."

Tom Callahan

It's lovely to read Nathaniel's nice comments about his Dad and it's a pity they didn't obtain greater prominence.

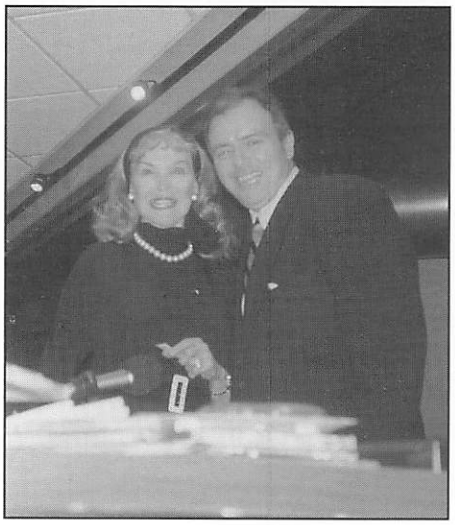
Both before and after the Wisconsin and Spokane events, Kathryn Crosby was busy promoting both Bing and her new book. Next Martin McQuade tells of his adventures with our hardworking Honorary President.

Mrs. Crosby Visits East Coast For Book Tour

A very cold February was considerably warmed by the enchanting and stunning presence of Kathryn Crosby, who visited New York City, Oyster Bay, Long Island, and New Canaan, Connecticut to promote her latest book, "My Last Years With Bing," a follow-up to Mrs. Crosby's "My Life With Bing", published in 1983.

I first met Kathryn at a book signing for the earlier tome which was held at Macy's in New York, and I became acquainted with her during the Hofstra Conference where I served as curator for the university's Crosbyana exhibition and moderator of the 'Bing and Business' panel, both of which she attended. She was pleased with my efforts and I was overwhelmed when she agreed to permit me to coordinate aspects of her forthcoming trip to New York.

Mrs. Crosby chose Tuesday, February 11 and Joe Franklin's Memory Lane Restaurant in Manhattan to start her East Coast book tour. I assisted Mr. Franklin with the preparations for what turned out to be a glittering evening with an overflow crowd. Buddy Bregman was present and selections from 'Bing Sings Whilst Bregman Swings' were played throughout the night. Joe launched the proceedings by describing Bing as "the world's foremost enduring perennial superstar". Joe interviewed Mrs. Crosby for well over a half-hour in surroundings resplendent with show business memorabilia. She described the event as "a literary party with food." She read Bob Hope's introduction to her book as well as other passages. When asked what first attracted her to Bing, she cited his speaking voice. She stated that Bing possessed one handicap - promptness - which triggered some trying times initially for the young bride but eventually she learned to adjust to it. Bing's co-star from *High Society*, Celeste Holm, shared reminiscences, and as if this weren't enough for an auspicious and fabled night, I was invited to join the festivities and serenade Kathryn and the rest of the captive audience with an a-cappella rendition of "Pennies From Heaven". These glamorous and mirthful two hours allowed Mrs. Crosby to sell well over 50 copies of her book. The occasion was recorded and subsequently broadcast in the wee hours of Sunday, February 16, on Joe's long-running Memory Lane radio program.



Kathryn Crosby and Martin McQuade during a commercial break at the Joe Franklin Show

The next day, Wednesday, February 12, Kathryn and I traveled by car to New Canaan, Connecticut, a venue which I asked my good friend Fred Romary, renowned Crosby scholar and associate editor of the well-remembered *Crosby Collector* magazine, to organize. What follows is an account by Mr. Romary of that memorable day.

"It isn't often a fellow can wander back through the time machine and encounter a most pleasant moment from the past. That's exactly what happened to me as I made my way through the portals of Elm Street Books. For there, radiant in her Jean Louis suit, stood the elegant Kathryn Crosby. The years had been good to her as she showed all the youthful energy for which she was always famous. We recalled that it had been 35 years, almost to the day, since we had last met. It was the opening of the new Madison Square Garden in New York and Bing and Bob Hope were rehearsing for the television spectacular which would herald the event.

That day in New Canaan was quite a success-sales were brisk-and when there was any down time Kathryn, Martin, and I discussed future projects and how they could best be handled...But more of these developments in future issues. Both Martin and I, as well as my wife, Karin, were most impressed by the way Kathryn continues to introduce new people to the magic of Bing Crosby."

On the next day, Thursday, February 13, we took the tour to the Book Mark Cafe located in historic Oyster Bay, Long Island. My friend, Lawrence Reed, whom I met at Hofstra, suggested this unique setting, where Mrs. Crosby read excerpts from her book to a rapt assembly.

Following her presentation, Kathryn and I joined the diners at a feast especially prepared for the occasion. The Bing Cherries dessert was a standout. Many local Crosby fans were in attendance and scores of books were purchased while Mrs. Crosby regaled one and all with delicious anecdotes of her illustrious life. Sadly, it was announced that this lovely emporium would close one week later, causing Kathryn to quip, "I've closed better places than this!"

After a most needed day of rest, during which she visited old friends such as her couturier, Oleg Cassini, Mrs. Crosby arrived on Saturday, February 15, at my hometown, Bay Ridge, in Brooklyn, New York, to appear at Lola Bell's Cafe and Wine Bar. Many friends and acquaintances of mine, all of whom know very well my devotion to Bing, were excited and thrilled to have such a world class celebrity in their midst. The whole community was completely enchanted by our prominent guest of honor. Carmela Amari, ICC member, presented Kathryn with a marvelous drawing of Bing, which captivated her. Again, many dozens of books were sold. The local television station, Brooklyn Cable [BCAT], covered the event and ran the segment for several weeks.

Mrs. Crosby was very gratified by this itinerary, which both Fred Romary and I arranged and promoted for her. As of this writing, the first week of June, Kathryn is back in New York and I have scheduled several appearances for her, chief among which is an interview with Katie Couric on the Today Show. She plans another trip to Joe Franklin's restaurant and will be feted at the august Player's Club in Gramercy Park. A tour of Brooklyn set up by state senator Marty Golden is in the offing.

This February afforded me a never to be forgotten opportunity to spend time with a gracious and beautiful lady who performs such an estimable job in keeping alive the memory of the man who has enhanced my life, as well as the lives of millions upon millions the world over. I know I shall always cherish the glow of that wonderful, wintry week.

QUEENS COLLEGE UPDATE

In March, I was commissioned by Queens College in New York City to put together an exhibition in conjunction with a centennial tribute to Bing Crosby. The display was culled from my collection and consisted of sheet music, photos, lobby cards, album covers, books and magazines, and several advertisements. It was on view from March 28 until April 30. It elicited a very warm response from both students and faculty, and it pleases me to state that the display helped to develop an interest in Bing among some younger collegians who knew little if anything about his legacy. In the limited space available, I tried to suggest the range of Crosby's career, and judging from the response, I think it made an impression.

A centerpiece of the celebration was a lecture given on April 6 by Gary Giddins entitled "Whatever Happened To Bing Crosby?" The speech was an attempt to explain why Bing's reputation seems currently to be in eclipse. Gary's premise seemed to mystify many of the older people in the audience to whom Bing's name remains quite familiar. In trying to state his case, he provided a litany of the staggering statistics of Crosby's fame and popularity, but couldn't adequately explain why Bing has been so sadly forgotten by so many. Perhaps it's a conundrum that may never be satisfactorily solved. Suffice it to say that events such as this may help to redress the situation.

By the way, I was pleased that Gary, during his talk, appeared to modify a statement which he had made elsewhere, especially at the Hofstra Conference; to wit, that Bing had an aversion to performing live. True, Crosby did not perform too often in concert where tickets were sold [except, of course, the early vaudeville and nightclub years and his tours at the end] but he certainly never ceased to enjoy entertaining in public year in, year out, whether on radio, television, or at bond rallies and troop shows. At Queens College, I was glad to hear Gary finally make that distinction. Another point which Giddins emphasized was that, although Bing may have somewhat lightened his workload during the sixties and seventies, his output continued to be extraordinarily prolific, especially when one considers the TV career - nicely exemplified by a video clip Gary brought along of Bing and Johnny Mercer from the "Hollywood Palace."

Additionally, Gary mentioned that he has on record a recantation from Gary Crosby of the more salacious passages from his odious book, "Going My Own Way." This admission greatly titillated the assembly. Mr. Giddins, I wish you Godspeed with your second volume.

Martin McQuade

(Editor: Since drafting his report, Martin has again been active on the Crosby front and he not only booked Kathryn on the prestigious 'Today' show on NBC but initiated, planned and co-ordinated the appearance as well as taking care of logistical considerations such as the pre-interview and the providing of books to NBC. Martin posted a brief report about the Players Club tribute on the Bing Crosby Internet Museum bulletin board which we now reproduce:

I attended the Players Club tribute to Bing's Centennial on Friday, June 6 in Manhattan. Kathryn and Harry Crosby were Guests of Honor. TV and movie clips were shown. Speakers included Joe Franklin, Gary Stevens and the Crosbys. It was a very emotional and memorable evening, producing an outpouring of fond recollections.

The Brooklyn Spectator which hit the stands today (June 9) had a front page cover story on Mrs. Crosby's recent visit to Brooklyn. Carmela Amari is pictured on the cover with Mrs. Crosby - a wonderful souvenir of a marvelous day.

Martin McQuade

The Today Show

Your Editor was still in the USA on June 3 when Kathryn Crosby appeared on this NBC flagship morning presentation. Hostess Katie Couric introduced a segment

about Bing's career and said that although there was a dispute over his year of birth some people had just celebrated his centennial. We then saw flashes from various Bing films ("Holiday Inn", "High Society", "Going My Way" and "Road To Bali") but when we got to an extract from "The Country Girl" which showed Bing in a dramatic scene we were told that he had a volatile temper. Kathryn was then introduced and after a bit of general chat, Katie asked Kathryn what she thought when she heard people talk about Bing's volatile temper. Kathryn politely said that she never knew anyone who said it and then left it that. She went on to say that she and Bing had a sound marriage although there were health issues with Bing often in pain when a kidney stone moved. She effectively countered comments about Gary Crosby's book and then went on to discuss her own book "My Last Years With Bing". It was a good performance by Kathryn in her usual polite style. I might have been more confrontational if I had been asked about Bing's volatile temper so perhaps it's a good job that the question was put to Kathryn.

Katie Couric interviews Kathryn

Photo Per Greg Van Beek

Martin McQuade has subsequently been in touch by e-mail:

> Kathryn Crosby was very pleased with her appearance on the *Today* show and very gratified that excerpts from *My Last Years with Bing* were posted on the NBC website. Mrs. Crosby was the soul of elegance in an Oleg Cassini ensemble that the couturier provided her expressly for the interview. The opening montage was well-crafted and it was interesting that Katie Couric mentioned before the interview that there is a dispute regarding Bing's birth year and during the interview Kathryn delighted me by saying that the Centennial celebration will continue into 2004. I watched the interview from the green room (resplendent with delicious pastries, coffee and tea) and all watching agreed that Kathryn was wonderful to behold. However, there was one sour note as far as Mrs. Crosby and I were concerned — the references to Gary Crosby's book and Bing's alleged volatility. I think Kathryn handled these topics with delicacy. Harry escorted Kathryn to the broadcast. Mrs. Crosby was disappointed that Matt Lauer was on vacation inasmuch as he and Harry are good friends but she asked an aide to convey an hello to Mr. Lauer. All in all, a memorable event and Mrs. Crosby was the personification of elegance and charm as usual. Hopefully, this will trigger more network appearances for Mrs. Crosby during the Centennial year(s).
>
> **Martin McQuade**

This was the best nationwide coverage we have seen to date in the USA of Bing's centennial. The TCM channel had a mini Bing festival early in May but that's all we are aware of so far. As we went to press, more reports of Kathryn's promotional tour were seen and we quote from *The Saratogian* newspaper of June 12 with grateful thanks to the newspaper concerned.

> SARATOGA SPRINGS - Since early June the two women have been crisscrossing New York state in a tan Toyota Camry making stops in Buffalo, Rochester and Syracuse. The road trip brings them to the Spa City on Friday evening. And while images of immortal duos like Thelma and Louise come to mind, if you were to think more along the lines of the Bing Crosby and Bob Hope road movies, you wouldn't be too far off. At least you would be in the same family.
>
> Kathryn Crosby - wife of 20 years of the late Bing Crosby - is on a book tour with her latest release, "My Last Years With Bing," She makes a stop Friday night at Barnes & Noble in Saratoga. Just what does one talk with Mrs. Crosby about when they are up close and in close traveling quarters? "Oh, we shoot the breeze," says Judy Schmid, Koenig Public Relations representative who is traveling with Crosby. Crosby and Schmid are in Rochester, in between appearances at an area hospital and on their way to a radio station for an on-air interview.
>
> "We talk about our children, about her kids and about my kid," Schmid says via cell phone. "We make girl talk. We do crossword puzzles."
>
> Kathryn Grant Crosby, accomplished performer, author, artist, nurse, teacher and golf tournament hostess, is on the road with her recently published companion volume to the 1983 book, "My Life with Bing."
>
> "The book tour has been very exciting," Crosby says. It has taken her from recent appearances on the "Today" show with Katie Couric to libraries, hospitals and radio shows across the Northeast.

Judy Schmid tells me that the tour was most enjoyable and in all 224 books were sold.

Malcolm Macfarlane

TRADING POST

Entries are free for all items of Crosbyana and there is a nominal charge of £2 for non-Crosby advertisements. All items are printed in good faith and we cannot accept responsibility for any dissatisfaction arising from the transaction as a result of these entries
Please send all advertisements to the Editor

Gerry Atkinson, 7 Plecy Close, Ferndown, Dorset BH22 8QL, UK

Official 44 page Souvenir Brochure from Bing's 1976 London Palladium appearance. Mint condition. Offers. Also similar from 60s / 70s / 80s for other vocalists - please request list.

Arthur Blood, 597 Osmaston Rd., Derby DE24 8NE, UK

Arthur still has some of the coloured A4 sized (approx. 8" by 11.5") collage of the stamps he has produced in recent times and this has been produced as a limited issue of 250. It costs £3 for UK members. Sadly it has proved uneconomical to also offer it to USA and Canadian readers. The collage would look lovely in a frame. See page 16 of the Summer 2002 issue of BING for a photograph of the collage.

Footlight Records, 113 East 12th St., New York, NY 10003, USA (Tel: (212) 533-1572, Fax: (212) 673-1496, e-mail: footlight1@aol.com)

For your Bing needs on CD and Vinyl. See also www.footlight.com

James Huntley, Flat 15, Block 2, Great Western Rd., Gloucester GL1 3PP, UK

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Mrs. Mills CD "The EP Collection"

David Whitfield CD "Stage & Screen Favourites"

Brian Jones, 1 Gellihaf Rd., Fleur De Lis, Blackwood, Gwent, NP12 3UY, UK

WANTED

Photographs and newspaper cuttings of Kathryn Grant Crosby, especially of her as a film actress.

Dieter Pressler, P.O.Box 1703, Hoodsport, WA 98548, USA email:dbpressler@mailbug.com, phone:360.877.6199) offers this ribbon in Bing's colors, first seen at Gonzaga. It can be worn as a Western tie, as a bow, or out of the breast pocket of a blazer. You can also attach it to a Crosby display when presenting Bing in public or in your Crosbyana room. - While supplies last, he will mail it to you anywhere for US$5.50, or 2 for US$10.00.

Select Circles, P. O. Box 302, Riverside, CT 06878, USA (Phone: 203-661-8421)

Select Circles have a large stock of Bing CDs. Write or call for information.

BING BINDERS

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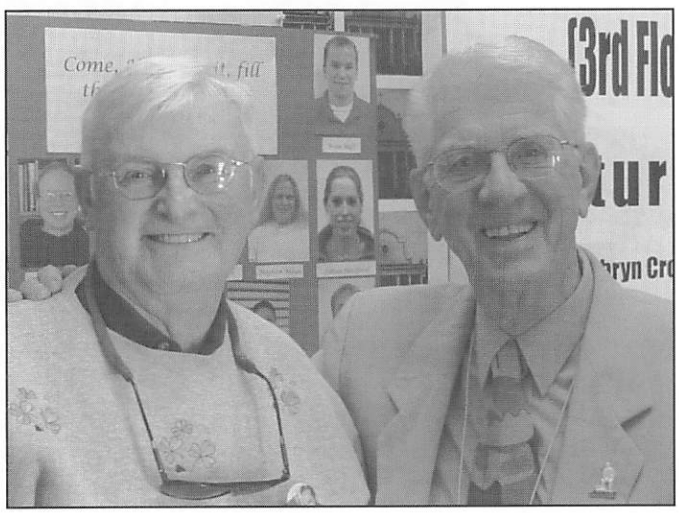
Crosby Clubs Around The World

The ICC is pleased to be associated with the following Crosby organisations.

Bing's Friends And Collectors Society,

Hobie and Cathie Wilson, 236 Andrieux St., Sonoma, California 95476-6909, USA (tel. 707 996 0257 - e-mail Bingsfriends@yahoo.com - Web Site address http://home.earthlink.net/~erinssmile/)

The club celebrated its twentieth anniversary last year and it issues a sixteen page newsletter every two months. The annual subscription is $12 (USA) and $16 (outside the USA).



Hobie Wilson (left) with Gord Atkinson at the Gonzaga event

The Victorian Bing Crosby Society

Bob Neate, 22 Pakenham St., Blackburn, Victoria, Australia 3130. (tel. [03] 9877 1983)

The club has 130 members and issues a newsletter every two months. In addition, it holds six film nights per annum at the Erwin Radio Theatre in Fitzroy. The annual membership fee is Aus $10.

Internet sites:

Bing Crosby Internet Museum:
www.kcmetro.cc.mo.us/~crosby/

This is a wonderful site which carries up-to-date news and has a lively discussion board. Not to be missed by those on the net.

The Immortal Talents of Bing Crosby

http://www.geocities.com/crissi_n/bing.html

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OTHER APPRECIATION SOCIETIES

We have reciprocal arrangements with the following clubs and societies for publicity purposes. They kindly advertise our club in their magazines and we are very pleased to return the favour.

In Tune International, 10 Collingwood Drive, Mundesley, Norfolk NR11 8JB, UK (phone/fax: 01263 722818, e-mail: gerry.stonestreet@virgin.net)

Described as the magazine for lovers of the golden age of popular music, this excellent periodical contains 40 pages about nostalgic and easy listening music. Subscriptions, which cover six issues, are £16.50 for the UK, £18.60 for Europe and £24 for the rest of the world. Payment can be made by credit card. Highly recommended.

Memory Lane, P. O. Box 1939, Leigh-on-Sea, SS9 3UH, England.(www.memorylane.org.uk.
e-mail: mail@memorylane.org.uk)

Memory Lane is a lively magazine specialising in music of the 1920s through to the 1950s. Although the emphasis is placed on British dance bands and vocalists of the 1930s and 1940s, *Memory Lane* also covers the American scene, jazz, big bands, personalities, music hall and variety artistes. Regular features on Al Bowlly - Britain's favourite vocalist. Published quarterly and attractively printed and presented, each edition includes exclusive articles by a team of world-class writers and journalists plus Picture Pages, CD and Cassette reviews, Readers Letters, discographical features and the advertisements that you will want to read. A *"must"* for 78 RPM collectors. 3 First Class stamps (or 3 IRCs) will bring a sample copy and full details.

Movie Memories, c/o Chris Roberts, 10 Russet Close, Scunthorpe, North Lincolnshire DN15 8YJ, UK (E-Mail: CRobmvm@aol.com)

A must for the fans of the golden age of the cinema, covering the films and stars of the 1930's to the 50s, both Hollywood and the UK. A thrice yearly magazine, with up-to-date news and well illustrated, which costs £10 for a year for UK readers and £15 for those from overseas.

Tony Bennett Appreciation Society, c/o Mark Fox, 13 Sunnyside, Heckmondwike, W. Yorks WF16 0LN, UK (phone: 01924 402469)

Pat Boone Appreciation Society, P. O. Box 63, Sunderland, SR1 1PN, UK

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'Sarsden', Lower Common, Aylburton, nr. Lydney, Gloucestershire GL15 6DR, England

The Doris Day Society, 31 Kirkfield Rise, Ambleside, Cumbria LA22 9DX, UK

The Deanna Durbin Society, c/o Mrs. Jutta Fagan, 13 Mayfair Court, Mayfair Close, The Ave, Beckenham, Kent BR3 5EL, UK

Dick Haymes Society, c/o Roger L. Dooner, 2951 Tyler St., NE Minneapolis, MN 55418, USA

International Al Jolson Society, c/o John Wehrman, 1195 Hickory Hill Drive, Green Bay, WI 54304, USA (e-mail: JWWehrman@aol.com)

Frankie Laine International Appreciation Society, c/o Tony Cooper, 18 Napier Crescent, Seamer, Scarborough, North Yorkshire YO12 4HY, UK (phone / fax 01723 863022 - email:tony@flias.globalnet.co.uk)

The Dean Martin Association, P. O. Box 80, Uckfield, East Sussex TN22 1ZR, UK

Mills Brothers Society, c/o Daniel Clemson, 604 N. Market St., Mechanicsburg, PA 17055-2727, USA (e-mail: MillsBros1@aol.com)

Nelson Riddle Appreciation Society - Contact Alan Wright, 4 Jardine Cottages, Templewood Lane, Stoke Poges, Bucks SL2 4BQ, UK (Phone / Fax 01753 663869)

Sinatra Society of America, c/o Charlie Pignone, P. O. Box 2705, Toluca Lake, CA 91610-0705, USA (www. FrankSinatra.com)

Sinatra Music Society, 36 Hillcrest Rd., Wylde Green, Sutton Coldfield B72 1EN, UK (tel: 0121-350-0683)

Sinatra Music Society, Dublin Branch, c/o Chris Hitchcock, 21 Roselawn Walk, Dublin 15, Ireland (phone: 01 8212418)

Andy Williams Appreciation Society, P. O. Box 5, Westerham, Kent TN16 1UE, UK

Books 'n' Bing

Heartaches By The Number: Country Music's 500 Greatest Singles

We spotted a review of this new book by Ron Wynn, of the Nashville City Paper which contained an interesting observation about Bing and Country Music. Here's an excerpt.

Despite it's international popularity, country music has seldom received the same type of exhaustive, comprehensive and analytical treatment routinely given to jazz, blues and many other genres. That situation has now been rectified with the release of *Heartaches By The Number: Country Music's 500 Greatest Singles* (Vanderbilt University Press). The 324-page volume is co-written by Nashville Scene music editor Bill Friskics-Warren and Kansas City critic David Cantwell, and is impressive, frequently astonishing in its scope, range and information.

"We weren't as interested in defining what is and isn't "country" as in engaging the music, including its roots and branches," Friskics-Warren said. "We were particularly attuned to the fluidities of the music's boundaries." The evidence of that is the inclusion of such artists as Swamp Dogg, Ray Charles, The Sir Douglas Quintet and **Bing Crosby** right alongside Johnny Cash, Loretta Lynn, Hank Williams, Sr. and many others. "Country music is incredibly durable and elastic," he added. "It also draws on every form of the American musical vernacular. I almost wish we had titled the book *Don't Fence Me In* if only to render this point explicit. **I mean, read one way, our book argues that Bing Crosby is the secret hero of country music.** Read another way, you'd think that cultural exchanges between rural blacks and whites gave birth to the music, which in many respects they did."

Friskics-Warren and Cantwell don't merely count down the hits. They offer expansive, personalized, and detailed stories behind the music, placing every tune in a social and historical context, while often providing rich nuggets or surprise stories. . . No matter what your choice might be for the all-time greatest country single, you're certain to enjoy, and quite possibly disagree with the views, opinions and analysis offered in *Heartaches By The Number*. But you won't find a more entertaining and valuable work available on singles, country or music in general.

Ron Wynn

To follow this, we received the following from Pat Shields:

> Cantwell and Friskics-Warren also show how pop music influenced country. One of the looming presences in the book is **Bing Crosby**, rarely identified with country but actually one of the genre's most important practitioners.
>
> "He's one of the heroes of the book," Cantwell says. "He was a huge influence on any number of country singers, and he also listened to country music. ... He played a big part in popularizing country songs." Crosby is represented by two tunes — "Pistol Packin' Mama" (his version of the Al Dexter hit, which reshaped the song considerably) and "Don't Fence Me In" (written by, of all people, the urbane Cole Porter).
>
> **Todd Leopold** - CNN

Well, we've always known that Bing was a huge influence on country & western singing but how nice to see it confirmed in this prestigious book which can be purchased for around $19.50.

Finally, Pat Shields also wrote about another book which contained a reference to Bing:

> Just finished the book, "Django Reinhardt" by Charles Delaunay, and on page 160 he writes of Django's activities in 1955:
> *"....when we got back to France we learned that Bing Crosby had done his level best to get in touch with Django while we were in Switzerland. Crosby wanted to take him back to America with him."*
> Wouldn't THAT have been something!

The book was originally published by DaCapo Press in 1988 but it is still available in paperback from Amazon, price $12.95.

Keith Parkinson's Celluloid Crosby

Bing's first "proper" film is generally regarded as *The Big Broadcast* (1932). It was his twelfth appearance on the big screen but the first of any consequence as far as acting and star potential were concerned.

His Hollywood debut was in the big budgeted *King of Jazz* (1930) but that was considered a showcase for the Rhythm Boys and Bing did not warrant a personal on-screen credit. And yet, 1930 was one of Bing's busiest years before the camera. The one-reeler *Two Plus Fours* was released that summer and **BING 127** gives a full run down on a short that did nothing to further Bing's movie career. *Check and Double Check* was a showcase for one performance by the Rhythm Boys. *Reaching for the Moon*, released at the end of the year, was another trio performance with Bebe Daniels and June McCloy substituting for Harry Barris and Al Rinker on Irving Berlin's non-hit "When the Folks Up High Do the Mean Low Down". And they were just the films in which Bing was seen on cinema screens in 1930. Some of his cinematic efforts ended up on the cutting room floor. Scenes for M-G-M's *The March of Time* and *Those Three French Girls* were solo Crosby performances filmed and then dropped. Whilst over at Universal studios The Rhythm Boys performed a sequence for *Many a Slip* which failed to make it to the final print.

1931 did nothing to progress the Crosby film career. He had a solo and a Rhythm Boys spot in Paramount's *Confessions of a Co-ed* but the studio failed to recognise sufficient Crosby potential to consider a contract. RKO released a short feature called *Humanette* that summer but that probably utilised the voices of the Rhythm Boys for puppets. The time was now approaching which gave cinema audiences the opportunity to start to familiarise themselves with the face behind the Crosby voice. From September radio listeners were beginning to pay attention to the vocal Bing on CBS radio. Mack Sennett decided to let the public see the singer who was selling an increasing number of 78s. Sennett signed Bing for six two-reel musical comedies. They showed that Bing Crosby was at home with both slapstick and light comedy as well as being able to deliver a ballad. Production values were low but the films had charm. The first Educational-Mack Sennett short to reach cinemas was *I Surrender Dear* in September. That was followed two months later by *One More Chance.*

The time was right for a more prestigious film venture. Twelve months earlier Paramount would have featured Bing as one of the speciality acts in a film such as *The Big Broadcast.* He would have taken his place alongside Kate Smith, The Mills Brothers, The Boswell Sisters, and The Street Singer. Indeed, whilst the casting details were being finalised both Rudy Vallee and Morton Downey were being considered for the role taken by Bing. The longer it took to sign up the film's

Bing at work in 'The Big Broadcast' watched by Leila Hyams and Stuart Erwin

leading man the faster Crosby's star was rising. So quickly was the scene changing that half way into production Paramount offered Bing a three year contract. *The Big Broadcast* was the turning point.

Bing was top billed but was not required to demonstrate any acting skills. He simply had to be himself - literally. He played a character called Bing Crosby. Crosby is employed by a radio station. His job is on the line because of his persistent unpunctuality. In view of Bing's escapades when employed by Paul Whiteman this could be interpreted as art imitating life. Bing is eventually sacked and it is George Burns, the radio station manager, who persuades the station's main sponsor to take Bing back. Onto this skeletal plot was grafted the speciality musical acts and a subplot which allows Bing two girlfriends. He announces plans to marry Mona, played by Sharon Lynne. She jilts Bing, marries, has the marriage annulled and returns to Bing. Whilst that tangle is proceeding, George Burns' secretary Anita, played by Leila Hyams, falls for Bing. The usual happy ending prevails. The plot was recognised for what it was: a slight story into which to drop a number of speciality acts. The reviewer for the "Hollywood Citizen News" summed it up nicely when the film was released that October. She wrote, "(Frank) Tuttle has taken a weak romantic story, a rather appealing array of stars...and produced an amusingly entertaining picture. By dint of his ingenuity and high appreciation of satire, Tuttle has made *The Big*

Broadcast good film fare". Whether or not Bing recognised the finished product as satire, as soon as his filming commitments were completed by the middle of August he took a holiday. He went on a fortnight's sword fishing expedition on a yacht owned by Nick Stuart.

Just in case there were many in the cinema audiences who failed to link the Crosby voice with the Crosby visage, Bing obliged by singing three numbers with which he was associated on radio and record: "Where the Blue of the Night Meets the Gold of the Day", "I Surrender Dear" and "Dinah". In fact, the first two had been featured in Mack Sennett shorts. He also sang a couple of hits to be - "Here Lies Love" and his first signature tune, "Please". His only other vocal in the film was a snatch of "I've Got Five Dollars", which he didn't commit to wax until 1956.

The Big Broadcast started the reversal of a trend which began towards the end of the 1920s. By 1928 audiences were paying money to hear performers speak and sing. Until then they had studied the silent mouthing of their favourite stars and then read the dialogue cards to see if their lip-reading was up to scratch. By 1932 audiences wanted to know what the faces of the dismembered voices of their favourite radio stars looked like. Hence the Paramount publicity advertising, "Names! Names! Names! All the leading stars of the air" And they weren't far wrong. All but two of the "stars" were cast for their musical reputations. Only the beleaguered radio station manager and his daffy secretary had non-musical backgrounds. That couple received the curiously formal on-screen billing of George N. Burns and Grace Allen. Because so many of the acts in the film were resident on America's East Coast, Paramount re-opened its New York Astoria Studio, situated on Long Island. It had been popular at the dawn of the sound era for filming the Marx Brothers' Broadway hits and for providing short films of a number of the Great White Way stars doing their thing for the movie cameras and microphones. Bing's contribution was filmed in Hollywood, however.

The film did only average business in the big cities. The punters there were more sophisticated and radio stars frequently made live appearances - quite often in cinemas as support to the film programme. But it was a different story in the 'sticks' and returns from the smaller communities where the singers had never been seen were vast. Overall Paramount was satisfied with the business achieved by *The Big Broadcast.* Before the end of October press reports revealed the studio's plans for a follow up. Bing and Burns and Allen were the only *Big Broadcast* performers named for the next film to present an array of radio stars. The studio did reveal a wish list which included W. C. Fields and Guy Lombardo and his Orchestra. Lombardo's selection was no surprise as Paramount had wanted him for *The Big Broadcast* before settling for Vincent Lopez and his Orchestra. The proposed follow up film, *International House*, went before the cameras for release in 1933. Bing was not in it. Burns and Allen and Fields were included but the nearest to a popular radio singer that could be mustered was Rudy Vallee, who, you will remember, was proposed for *The Big Broadcast.* It was four years before Paramount capitalised on the *Big Broadcast* title with *The Big Broadcast of 1936.* Bing had four minutes of screen time in which to sing "I Wished on the Moon". *The BB of 1936* was sufficiently profitable for *BBs of 1937* and *1938* to follow. Burns and Allen were in every *Big Broadcast* apart from the last. That one is remembered today for being Bob Hope's first feature film and introducing his signature tune "Thanks for the Memory".

There was not a lot of disposable income around during the days of the American depression and even loose change to buy a cinema seat had to compete with clothing the kids and putting a meal on the table. For the next fifteen years audiences continued to build until they peaked in 1946. The construction of cinemas had reached its highest level towards the end of the previous decade. During the mid to late 1930s a new picture house - quite often a super cinema - was opening most weeks in the UK. Maximum publicity was sought for these openings and guaranteed crowd pullers were in demand for initial film presentations. I was interested for find a newspaper advertisement announcing the opening of the Hippodrome in Wallasey on Monday, May 15th, 1933. The cinema's slogan was, "You can hear every word in the new Hippodrome". Like all super cinemas, it had a cafe. It also boasted a free car park for 300 cars, somewhat ahead of its time for the early thirties. The Hippodrome's premiere attraction was *The Big Broadcast.* Although it was advertised as featuring Bing Crosby and Arthur Tracy it then sold the film short with the statement, "six great musical numbers". Unless it was making reference to the half-dozen Crosby vocals, of course. At the same time, across the world in New Zealand, the Pavilion Cinema in Christchurch closed for alterations and redecoration. When it reopened on Valentine's Day in 1933 it followed Wallasey's example and booked *The Big Broadcast.*

The Big Broadcast and its three successors will not find a ready audience today. Their main appeal is the speciality performances by Ethel Merman, Bill "Bojangles" Robinson, The Nicholas Brothers, The Vienna Boys Choir and Kirsten Flagstad. And Bing, of course.

Keith Parkinson

The Musicaladers - and more

I mentioned earlier in the magazine that I inveigled Michael Crampton to accompany me to the Spokane Public Library to research old newspapers in the hope of uncovering a little more about Bing's early musical career in Spokane. Nancy Gale Compau at the library had helped me by e-mail when I was preparing my book *Bing Crosby - Day By Day* and it was a real pleasure to meet her in the flesh. Nancy kindly produced binders containing the actual newspapers from 1924 and 1925 which made a real change from peering at microfilm.

We already knew that Bing joined the

Musicaladers early in 1924 as drummer and singer. Al Rinker was the band's pianist and the other members of the band were James Heaton, Miles Rinker, Robert Pritchard and Claire Pritchard. They made their debut together at the Manito Park Social Club, appearing on Sunday nights. We couldn't find any details about the Manito Park engagements but we did read that the Musicaladers were used as part of the "Frank Finney and his Laughlanders" presentation at the Auditorium Theater.

As further background, we had a quote from "The Hollow Man."

The boys' biggest thrill came when they were offered a week's engagement at the Casino Theater. "The reason they put us on," Al [Rinker] says, "is because it was kind of a novelty to have neighborhood boys with a band. You didn't find six-piece bands like that in Spokane. And it was a lot of fun. We even had all the professional musicians from the Davenport Hotel—the top hotel in Spokane—coming down to hear us. So we were all kind of puffed up a little bit; we thought that was great—and I guess it was, at the time, considering that we were just kids."

(*Bing Crosby, The Hollow Man*, page 44)

So it was with real excitement that we turned over a page to see a large advert indicating that The Musicaladers commenced a week's engagement at the Casino Theater on March 28, 1924 where they were described in the billing as "Masters of Jazz".

A review in the local papers was favourable.

> A dual attraction of the Musicaladers and Colleen Moore in 'Painted People' is being featured by the Casino theater in the presentation of a well-rounded program this week. . . The Musicaladers prove a real winner and dispense a program worth listening to.
>
> (*Spokane Daily Chronicle*, March 29)

After that, as Bing describes it, The Musicaladers went on to obtain an engagement on Friday and Saturday nights at the Peking Cafe, a second-story Chinese restaurant in the Fidelity Mutual Building, W518 Riverside Avenue.

> For three or four months the Musicaladers had a job playing twice a week in a Chinese restaurant on Riverside Avenue. It had a dubious reputation, but The Pekin was a favorite Friday and Saturday night hangout for high-school kids. There were rumors that alcohol was available to teenagers there, and my mother was purse-lipped about it. But the pay was more than I'd ever taken home before, and I was able to allay some of my mother's doubts about the restaurant's respectability by pointing to its most respectable financial rewards.
>
> (Bing Crosby, *Call Me Lucky,* page 75)

We could not trace any information about the Peking Cafe (other than it's address) but if it was selling alcohol during prohibition it was not likely to have advertised too heavily! Around April 1924, Bing apparently decided to drop out of university when he realised that was earning more money singing than he would as an assistant lawyer. He took a temporary job as a clerk with the Great Northern Railway and continued to work with The Musicaladers during the summer when they played at Lareida's Dance Pavilion at E4902 Sprague, Dishman, receiving $25 for three nights a week. Sadly we couldn't find any newspaper coverage of these appearances either although we only had chance to quickly glance at the newspapers for that particular period.

We jumped ahead to May 1925 at which time the Musicaladers had broken up. Gary Giddins tells us in *Pocketful Of Dreams* (page 106) about the grand reopening of the Clemmer Theatre on May 9 when Bing formed part of a vocal group. We reproduce the advert for that opening night on the next page and it would seem that the vocal group was called 'The Three Harmony Aces'. Apparently, Al Rinker accompanied the trio from the pit. Again, the review in the local paper was good.

> . . . The added attraction of the program, the Three Harmony Aces and Gwendolyn Hayden, interpretative dancer, put a lot of life into the program and received encores that were too numerous to take.
>
> (*The Spokesman-Review,* May 10)

The following week the advert for the attractions at the Clemmer Theatre stated "The Three Harmony Aces held over by popular demand. Songalists par excellence." but by week three, there is no mention of them in the weekly advert for the Theatre. Let Al Rinker take up the story again.

> The manager of the theater got a quartet together and wanted us to do a little stage presentation. We did, but the quartet wasn't very good. I was in the pit playing piano for the guys. The manager finally let the quartet go but he kept Bing. He thought he'd let Bing try it alone. I played in the pit for Bing and he did songs like "Red Hot Henry Brown." He'd sing and dance a little. We did this for a couple of weeks and then Bing came down into the pit and we started doing duets. . . . Bing had a little cymbal and I'd play piano and sing with him. We stayed at the Clemmer Theater for a few more weeks. We were each making $30 a week. That was big money for us.
>
> (Al Rinker, as quoted in *Bing Crosby, A Lifetime of Music*, page 9)

Michael and I found adverts for the Clemmer Theatre showing an act billed as 'The Clemmer Entertainers' running up to the week ending October 29 and we guessed that this could be Bing and Al. Confirmation came in the form of the *Spokane Daily Chronicle* for January 1, 1926 which carried an article about Bing and Al Rinker under a heading "Los Angeles captured by Spokane pair; Rinker, Crosby make theatrical hit." The text continued:

> An old Ford, a song and an open road, and incidentally a little gas, and Harry (Bing) Crosby and Alton Rinker were happy for all the world was theirs.
>
> So it was that a couple of months ago the two chums embarked for the sunny south, there to seek their fortunes, provided the limited gas supply held out. After a series of various adventures they arrived in San Francisco. Here they tarried a few days before making their way to Los Angeles. Once there, the dilapidated 'flivver' was discarded and the two surveyed the new-found land.
>
> A little bit of this and that, including a few song numbers, was gathered together and the pair sought an audience with Fanchon & Marco, international dancing stars and entertainers. This famous team approved their offering and sought to book them over the west coast theater circuit and secure them an Orpheum contract. The latter offer is now being tentatively arranged for the coming season.
>
> During the last month, the boys have made successful appearances at four of the leading theaters in Los Angeles, Crosby singing and the two doing a humorous comedy sketch. They started singing at the Lafayette cafe and then were engaged at the Boulevard and Alexandria theaters. At present the versatile pair are appearing on the program at Loew's State, the largest theater in the southern city.
>
> Crosby and Rinker were first brought to the attention of the theater-going public by Manager Roy R. Boomer of the Clemmer theater, when he presented them as the **Clemmer Entertainers** last summer. Crosby is the son of Mr. and Mrs. H. L. Crosby, E508 Sharp Avenue, and Rinker of Mr. and Mrs. C. D. Rinker, formerly of this city. Both young men attended Spokane schools, Crosby at Gonzaga and Rinker, at North Central.

We asked our friend Gary Hamann in Los Angeles to look at the LA papers for December 1925 to confirm the appearances described in the Spokane paper but unfortunately Bing and Al were not listed on the Theatre bills there.

So we have discovered a little more about Bing's early work and whilst it's not earth-shattering it does expand our knowledge usefully. Clearly the dates suggested by Ted Crosby in his book *The Story of Bing Crosby* (page 98 onwards) and Barry Ulanov (*The Incredible Crosby*, page 37 onwards) are a little out. Also it would seem that Bing and Al left Spokane for Los Angeles later than the earlier accepted date of October 15, 1925 and presumably it must have been the end of October or even early November when they departed on their long trip to California.

Malcolm Macfarlane

One Sweet Letter From You

Members' views, opinions and comments are always welcomed and we have great pleasure in reproducing some of the letters received since the last issue

Peter Cakanic Jr., North Augusta, South Carolina, USA

Your write-up of the Hofstra Bing event is great. Either your memory is superb, you used a tape recorder or just took great notes, whatever, you and the other contributors did such a marvelous job that I don't regret not being there in person. I knew it would be a stressful three days and your account of you and Wig "missing the van and hailing a cab" proves to me that my cardiologist and I made the right decision. But I have reservations on United Airlines, Chicago to Spokane for the Gonzaga event.

. . . I've recently moved and all my Bing stuff is still in boxes. But I did want to comment on the Russ Columbo book being planned. I like Russ. He was more of a "crooner" than a singer because you couldn't hear him without a mike, according to Sam Coslow, composer of "Just One More Chance." Russ died too young and probably would have remained popular. But he didn't have the charisma of Bing. He couldn't sing rhythm and in effect copied Bing. I have a four LP set put out by the family about 20 years ago that contain many songs before he adopted Bing's style right to the "boo, boo, boo" which he uses throughout his version of "Paradise." When he passed on in 1934 he was singing exactly like he did in 1931. Bing's voice was deepening and his style was evolving by then. I hope the author doesn't get carried away and make him more than he was as with James Dean, Marilyn Monroe, Bobby Darin and even Elvis. When I was 15 or 16 and really getting into Bing, I looked up news accounts of Bing and Russ in the NY Times. Gary Crosby's birth got more space that Russ's death. And "Pop Memories" shows Bing's hits at least four to one for Russ He was a good crooner, but his acting was wooden.

Here's looking forward to meeting you at Gonzaga.

(Editor: Pete and I duly met at Gonzaga and I took his photo with another Crosby enthusiast.)

Pete meets Judy Schmid at Gonzaga.

Mozelle Seger, N. Hollywood, California, USA

The Spring magazine is excellent. You did a very complete coverage of the Hofstra event and thanks for mentioning the disputed date of Mr. Crosby's birth. There are so many stories! Howard's "Uncle Bing" is the Mr. Crosby I worked for. He was so nice to his office staff.

I've sent the Gonzaga info to five newspapers and A. C. Lyles and reminded James Bacon.

Gord Atkinson, by e-mail from Ottawa, Canada.

Congratulations on another excellent edition of BING!! It was a most interesting and fascinating read. The coverage of Hofstra was really great. You certainly summated the events in a way that will make for a vivid remembrance of the conference. Your Gonzaga preview should attract more fans to attend.

Jon Oye, by e-mail from Chicago, USA

I wanted to thank you for placing my artwork on the back cover of BING magazine. I think it reproduced well, I'm honored that I can contribute in my small way to the magazine and to the preservation of Bing's memory. The Milwaukee get-together was pleasant and intimate. Mrs. Crosby was warm and gracious.

Having skimmed the latest issue, I wanted to touch on a couple of subjects with you. First, the news of the musical discoveries in the NYC Public Library, and Michael Feinstein's basement ("Music That Satisfies"), is truly exciting. I actually got chills reading about it. Great detective work on your part.

Secondly, while reading your comments regarding Buddy Bregman's evasiveness in revealing his age, I recalled that at the Irish Music Archive tribute to Bing in Milwaukee, Buddy talked to the audience about his having attended the Bing and Jolson recording session - and he said he was 9 years old at the time. Earlier in the day, Mrs. Crosby had stated that Buddy "was only 18" when he made the *Bregman Swings* LP with Bing. I thought she was only joking, until Buddy confirmed that her statement was fact when he revealed his age at the 1947 Jolson session. If all of this is true, and if I did my math correctly, then that would make him about 65 years old now, since the Jolson session took place at about this time of year. Thought you might find this little tidbit interesting.

Keith Parkinson, St. Helens, Lancashire, UK

I've just finished reading BING 133. It was right to devote several pages to covering Hofstra. My appetite was whetted by the overview of some of the sessions. I'm not sure of the copyright situation but printing some of the presentations in our magazine would increase everyone's knowledge as far as the more specialised coverage is concerned. At least, that was my view until I reached the end of the magazine and read the piece by Thomas Vinciguerra for the *New York Times.* He managed to make some of the sessions sound deadly boring. Perhaps Bob Achorn's speculation that the intention was to make fun of Bing

explains what was behind the article. Anyway, based on the presentations I have heard, there was a lot of new information contained in some of the papers presented. I was particularly impressed with Gary Giddins' keynote address and your 'Bing in WWII' presentation. I thought you balanced the scholarly with the entertaining.

Robert Achorn, Sutton, Massachusetts, USA

Bing Crosby had no greater admirer in the pop singing trade than Tony Bennett. In one of his numerous tributes to Bing over the years, Bennett said: "Every singer — from Perry Como to Dean Martin to Frank Sinatra to myself — learned their craft from Bing." Now Bennett, still performing at 77, has gone beyond those earlier kind words. He is celebrating Bing for "the best performance ever done by a popular singer."

Bennett offered that kind assessment in his version of a newly-issued "Artist's Choice" CD. It includes his selection of 16 songs, by performers ranging from Sinatra to Rosemary Clooney to Louis Armstrong. And, of course, Bing, as the best.

In Bennett's mind, the best performance is not "Temptation" "Please," "Star dust," "Moonlight Becomes You," "White Christmas" or any of Bing's jazzier numbers. It is "I Love You, Samantha," one of the less-celebrated Cole Porter tunes from *High Society*.

This is what Tony Bennett says: "I chose this record for this collection for one reason: As a student listening to popular singers, I think this is the best performance ever done by a popular singer. I have always been taken by how Bing just hummed his way into the introduction of this song, and then came in on a different key. I still don't know how he did it — but that doesn't matter. It is a beautiful, perfect pop recording."

That tribute gained wide distribution in the promotion of the new CD. Bennett's words were selected to top a full-page advertisement in the New York Times Sunday magazine. Strong words, indeed, considering the 3,000 or 4,000 songs recorded and unrecorded, that Bing sang in his lifetime, not to mention the hundreds of thousands of songs recorded by so many others.

It may not be quite my favorite Crosby performance, but I think it is a fine choice. Cole Porter called it his favorite of the numbers he wrote for *High Society*. Clearly, it was the freshest piece of material and the best-performed in the film. Porter predicted that his ballad for Frank Sinatra "You're Sensational," would be the film's hit. It was a success for him, and Bing did a tasty version later. But it was not The hit. Rather, Porter's simpler "True Love" provided Bing with his final million-seller.

When "True Love," to which Grace Kelly contributed some reedy if pleasant tones, took off, "I Love You, Samantha" was quickly pushed down the commercial scale by the business-department movers and shakers. For his part, Bing concentrated on plugging "True Love" and his "Now You Has Jazz" riff with Louis Armstrong. In the trade, you go with what's working.

Some viewed the 1955 "Samantha" as a sort of "upside-down echo of Porter s 1949 movie song, "Farewell, Amanda." Not so. "Amanda" is a rueful comedy number. "Samantha" is a full-throated, passionate love ballad. Bing in middle age tended to steer away from such material but he gave this one vitality, emotion and the melody in his voice that was lacking in some of his other work in that period.

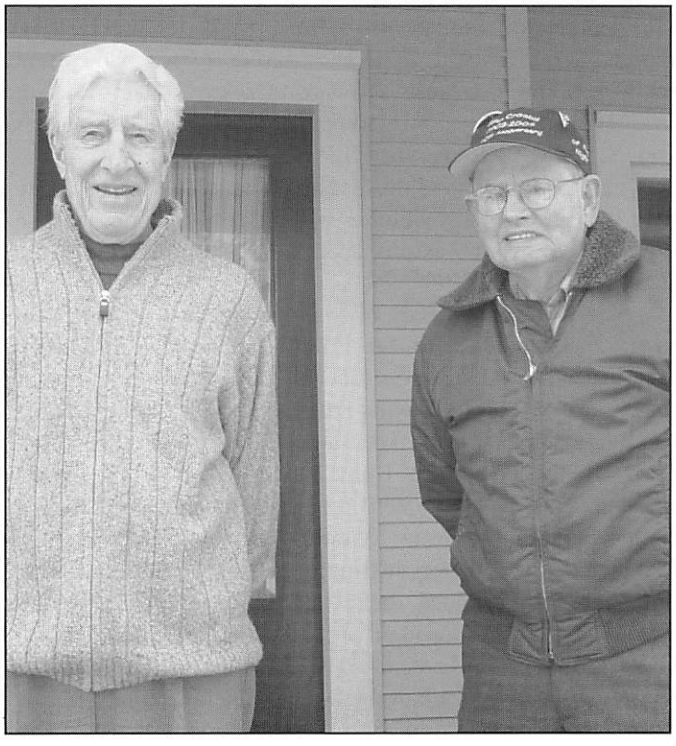
Tony Bennett loves that kind of big ballad ("I Left My Heart in San Francisco," "When Joanna Loved Me," etc.). That may help explain his attraction to "I Love You, Samantha," as heard on the soundtrack. Bennett's new CD was issued in the States by Sony Music. Nine of the 16 recordings came out of the Sony vaults. That might suggest a certain limitation in the selection process. But Sony licensed the other seven numbers, including Bing's, from other companies. A couple came from Universal Music, which probably could offer access to all of Bing's American Decca work. So it appears that Bennett made his choices with great freedom.

At the end of the day, it's nice to know that the best performance ever done by a popular singer was done by Bing Not surprising, but nice just the same. And true, of course, whether it be "Samantha" or one of so many other delightful performances.

(Editor: Wow! The best performance ever done by a popular singer, says Tony Bennett. That's worth bringing to the notice of the radio presenters!)

Sam Fleshman, Eugene, Oregon, USA

On the 14th of May, my wife and I were priviledged to have Hobie and Cathy Wilson as overnight guests. The next morning Virgil Edwards arrived. The four of us caravaned to Spokane for the 100th Anniversary Celebration of Bing's birth. We arrived about 4:30 in the afternoon. After getting setup in our apartments on the Gonzaga University campus we went out to dinner.



Virgil Edwards (left) & Sam Fleshman at the Crosby Alumni House.

The next morning was when all the fun began. We wandered around the campus to acquaint ourselves with it. Friday evening all the Crosbyites gathered at Bing's statue for a re-dedication ceremony. Gord Atkinson was the Master-of-ceremony. Kathryn Crosby spoke a few words as did Rich Little and others, all the while the thunder was booming.

Afterwards, there was a no-host reception in the Crosby room. Some of the celebrities were Kathryn Crosby, members of Bing's family, Malcolm Macfarlane, Michael Crampton of the International Crosby Circle, Gord Atkinson, Rich Little, Buddy Bregman, Hobie and Cathie Wilson of the Bing's Friends and Collectors Society, and many good Crosby collectors from all over the world. I made some very fine acquaintances.

The seminars were well presented, the music on the campus was all Bing and the movies were great. Everybody was congenial and sociable because we had a common denominator. The University had done an excellent job of organizing all facets of the celebration except the Fathers had no pull with the Man Upstairs to shut off the thunder during the re-dedication of the statue.

We, who stayed in the University housing were well pleased with the accommodations. The banquet on Saturday evening was well organized and believe me the meal was out of this world. It was the first banquet I ever went to in my 78 years that the chicken was not like rubber. The entertainment was well presented. The people that didn't get to come do not know what they missed. It was a once in a lifetime experience and I would not missed it for the world, an opinion shared by everyone there. I promised my wife I would take her to the 200th celebration!

Graham Pascoe, Bathurst, NSW 2905, Australia

By the time you read this you'll have returned from the Spokane celebrations. I'm envious. Was the pipe still in Bing's mouth, I wonder? When I visited in 1983 it was removed so the students wouldn't souvenir it.

Thanks for another great *BING.* Your comprehensive report on the Hofstra conference brought back some fond memories and wasn't Howard Crosby's contribution interesting. The page 25 reference to the Aussie silver disc of Bing's 'Easy To Remember' LP reminded me that I have a (not very good) photo of the disc and plaque. It was sent to me by a lady in Canberra who has it. Apparently, more than one copy of the award was produced, a common practice at the time.

The 100th anniversary of Bing's birth got some attention in the main media here. On Friday 2nd, top-rating Sydney announcer Alan Jones concluded his 2GB morning session just before nine o'clock with 'True Love' and a brief reference to Bing's achievements. The same station's afternoon drive time announcer, Philip Clark, outlined some of Bing's achievements, played some Bing songs and an excerpt from a Philco radio show. He interviewed by telephone John Ellis, President of The Victorian Bing Crosby Society, about Bing and (later) me about the Hofstra conference. Barbara Woodfine who was President of the Australian Branch of Club Crosby in the 1950s had alerted 2GB to the occasion although Clark said he was aware of the controversy concerning Bing's birth date. That morning, Bert Newton, a long-time Crosby fan, included a very brief segment on Bing in his nation-wide 'Good Morning Australia' TV show.

Also on Sydney commercial radio, 2CH's Bob Rogers included a one-hour tribute to Bing including some well-informed biographical comments in his Saturday night (3rd May) 'Reminiscing With Bob Rogers' program. He began with 'There's Nothing That I Haven't Sung About' and included a wonderful medley of songs which David Currington (whom he acknowledged as 'the Australian representative of The International Crosby Circle') had sent him. He had some newly released Bing CDs to give away but I wasn't lucky enough to win one of them. I'd spent a couple of enjoyable hours at David Currington's home that afternoon. Perhaps by coincidence, one of our commercial TV networks screened *Just For You* that afternoon so we watched Bing sing his first song in the movie. Thane Cooper had prepared an interesting Crosby quiz which we all attempted but I won't mention that I was near the bottom of the class with only 18 points from a possible 40.

I'm sure Bing's anniversary was well covered on community radio throughout Australia. My own program on Bathurst's 2MCE FM on 5th May comprised a tribute to Bing. The two-hour session included mostly Bing's recordings plus a few others which I hopefully integrated into the commentary. They included songs by two Australian Crosby imitators, Ross Higgins and Johnny O'Connor.

Soon I'll begin to write my 'book' documenting the complete results of the research which led to my considerably abridged Hofstra presentation on Bing's impact on Australian entertainment.

(Editor: The pipe was brought out of storage to be placed in the statue's mouth for the weekend although it didn't match the statue as it was brand new in appearance whilst the statue has obviously weathered over the last 22 years. Our thanks to Graham for his update about Crosby happenings in Australia. Stanley Shipp was another man I saw at Gonzaga...)

Stanley Shipp, Port Hope, Michigan, USA

Where does one begin when commenting on the spectacular weekend we had celebrating the one-hundredth anniversary of the birth of Bing Crosby? I will never forget the sights and sounds of Gonzaga University, especially the constant playing of Bing's music as I strolled around campus. When I first heard Bing singing over the loud speakers I thought, this must be how it is if one is good enough to get into Heaven! I can't say enough about the organization of the weekend and enjoyed all of the presentations. The rededication of the statue of Bing was very moving and other than the chilly weather, I think everyone was glad they attended. The Crosby family was as accessible as ever and I came away knowing more about them and Bing. The gala event on Saturday evening, with Rich Little and Frank Sinatra Jr., was a night I will never forget.

I wish more people who had attended the symposium at Hofstra could have attended Gonzaga. Both weekends were unique and offered a great opportunity for those of us who admire and love Bing. I especially missed Wig and Laura Wiggins. I know they would have had a terrific time. I would like to take the occasion of this letter to praise you and our friend, Gord Atkinson. Because of you and Mr. Atkinson, the many of us who crave insight into the life of Bing would be lost without the dedication and hard work both of you have done. Between the books, taped interviews and personal recollections, you have thoroughly educated us. It is impossible to measure the amount of kindness and caring you have. You give of yourselves without ever expecting anything in return. You are gentlemen and I am proud to be associated with both of you.

A unique aspect of the Gonzaga weekend was staying in the dormitory. A big HELLO to those who stayed in Dillon Hall. What a swell party it was!!! We talked about a "Bing" weekend in Ottawa, Canada someday so that Gord and his

wife won't have to travel. Maybe Rich Little will be in town too! How about it Gord?

My best to your wife and all those in the UK associated with the ICC, Linda and I hope to get to Leeds in the near future.

Doreen Hubbard, Westcliff On Sea, Essex, UK

It all came about because of Arthur Blood's Bing stamps. I had written to the local paper about something totally different. But, I always put my Bing stamps on any letters I send out. The reporter from the Southend Standard telephoned me to say "Thank you for your letter and whilst speaking, I noticed the stamp with Bing Crosby on your envelope. Is there a story there?" I replied that I belonged to the International Crosby Circle and there was a chap who prepared these stamps regularly, so really there was no actual story. He said, "On the contrary, I am busy preparing an article to wish Bob Hope a happy 100th birthday and should like to come and see you to discuss." To cut a long story short, he asked if I had a photograph of Bing and Bob together - and, of course, I had. He came, took three photographs of yours truly with the photograph and, hey Bingo, there was I in the local paper the following week. All thanks to Arthur's stamps. He didn't, unfortunately, choose the best photograph - of the boys or myself, but there you are. A good mention of the ICC and I hope someone, somewhere will join because of the article.
(Editor: Arthur has stopped producing the larger Bing stamps at present but he does still have some collages left in stock - see 'Trading Post'. He is investigating the possibility of producing smaller stamps in future (same size as postage stamps) and he will give details in a future issue of the magazine if he goes along that route.)

Stan White, Rothwell, Northamptonshire, UK

I would like to thank the following UK radio people for commemorating the anniversary of Bing's birth in their various ways, and for making use of whatever help I was able to give.

Paul Barnes; Bill & Angela Rennells; Syd Atkinson; Eddie Murphy (Eire); Keith Skues; Mike Carey; Mandy Morton; Desmond Carrington; Dave Aylott (producer); Russell Davies; David Jacobs; Roy Oakshott (producer); Malcolm Laycock; Howard Leader; Jim Reilly; Nigel Ogden; Carlo Florentine; Richard Spendlove; Eddie Grabham; Paul McKenzie; Anna Murby; Robbie Owen; John Shaw; Amanda Bowman; Kevin Saddington; John Hayes; Louis Robinson.

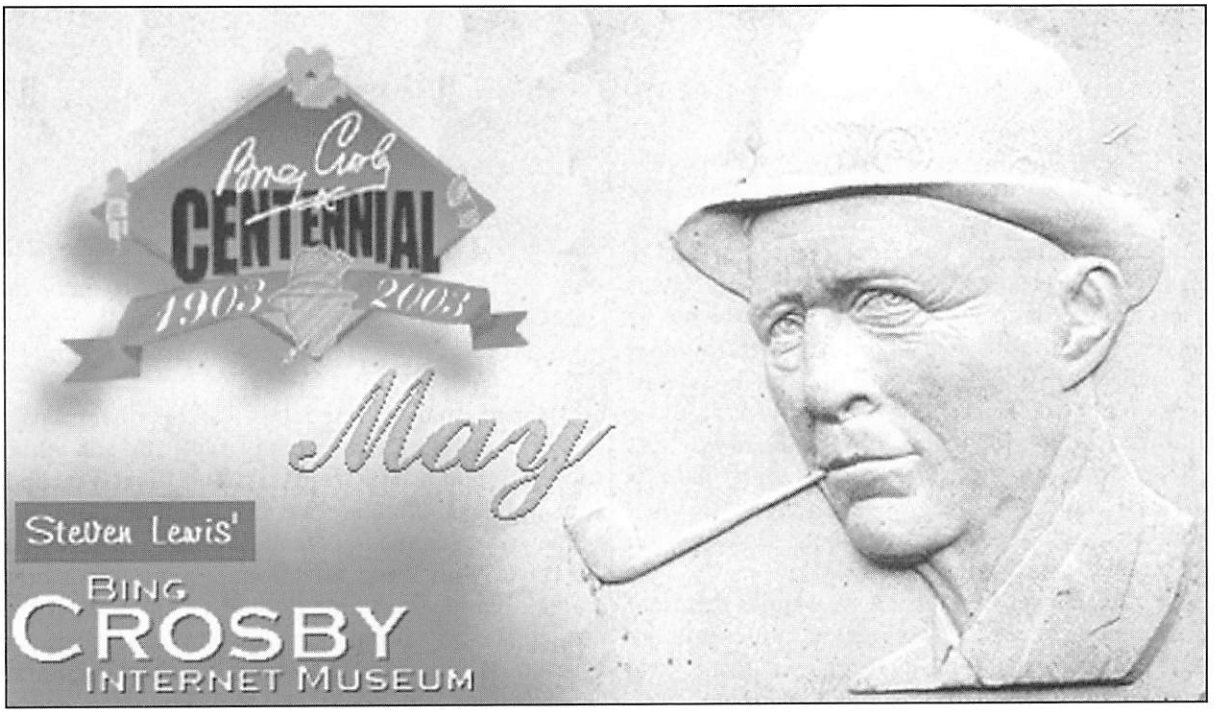
Also, Malcolm Macfarlane; Ken Barnes and Ken Crossland, for their contributions to some of the programmes broadcast by the above people. Also to Ernest Sutkowski (USA) for helping me to help the above.
(Editor: A special mention from me too for Paul Barnes for his excellent article in the East Anglian Daily Times on May 3. It was one of the best I saw.)

Maggie Ryan, Bridgwater, Somerset, UK

I would like to take this opportunity to extend my appreciation and thanks to my presenters. The coverage of Bing's Centennial was to say the least phenomenal. I am listing them in alphabetical order because they are equally supportive - not just for the centenary, but throughout the years keeping Bing Crosby singing on British Radio. As yet I haven't felt the need to use the thumb screws
HENRY AYRTON - GRAHAM DANTON - ANNE HOPPER - GERALD JACKSON - JUDITH LEY - DAVID LOWE - CHRISTINE PRENTICE - CHRIS ROBINSON - FRANK WAPPAT

Also my gratitude must go to FRANK LEWTHWAITE and CYRIL STANSFIELD, my unpaid and overworked helpers who record out of my area. This letter of thanks wouldn't be complete without mentioning the help from my good friend ERNIE SUTKOWSKI.

It is at this point I should be holding the OSCAR aloft and thanking my Mum and Dad — the thanks go to the previously mentioned people!



Bert Bishop's
BING ON THE BOX

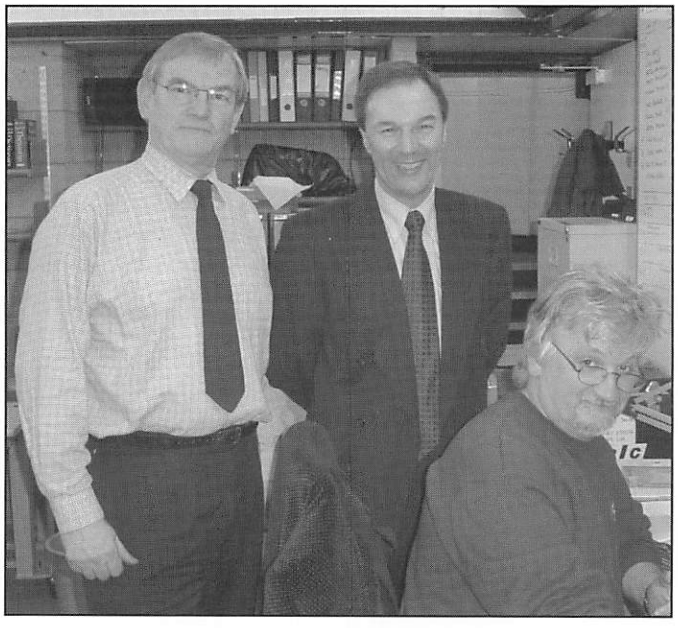
Well, did you evah! Wall to wall Crosby to the point where one was thinking hold it right there - lay back you cats; bivouac! Let's get our breath for a minute and digest what's been happening so far. Months go by with very little afoot; pages often padded out with near trivia, when suddenly we are swamped with more material than we can shake a microphone at. And the sad thing is that unless we pick up on some of the numerous broadcasts in greater detail in future issues, then much of what has been happening over many national and local airwaves will be lost to readers far removed from the many and varied catchment areas that have joyously and gratifyingly participated in the centenary of Bing's birth. For it's impossible to adequately chronicle, in one issue of our magazine, every deferential word, relay the homage, pass on the anecdotes both reverential and sometimes controversial, and document the music that has been forthcoming from presenters and ICC members alike across the world in the past few weeks. We wanted international recognition of 3rd. May and by George we got it!

BING: THE GREATEST OF THEM ALL?
BBC R2 8.30 pm
'First in a three-part series on the life of Bing Crosby, arguably the greatest entertainer of the twentieth century. Presented by Pat Boone, with help from biographer Gary Giddins, working colleagues Al Rinker, Loyce Whiteman and Mary Carlisle, members of the International Crosby Circle, and featuring the voice and music of the 'Old Groaner' himself.'

Such was the *Radio Times* introduction to UK national radio's most extensive tribute, featured over a three week period. In securing the services of Pat Boone as narrator an 'insider' credibility came to the series, for Pat had a huge following during his hey-day in the Fifties. To the opening bars of *"True Love"* Pat was to say 'We grew up with Bing and his voice was everywhere around us in the air, and we knew what he could do. By that time he had had thirty-eight number one hits; and some of them were the most famous recordings of all time.' Excerpts from seven of those songs followed, which included *"White Christmas"* .... 'the biggest selling popular record of all.' Gary Giddins explained how it became the Services second national anthem and just how many entertainment records Bing set up, as yet, and unlikely to be excelled.

To illustrate Bing's emergence as a quite different and unique singer in the Twenties, a representative recording by another vocalist, sounding as Pat said 'like a cartoon character', was played in juxtaposition to *"You Took Advantage Of Me"*. Gary again on Bing's unpretentiousness of whose wealth nobody was envious. 'The character he created was just like you who just happened to born with a good set of pipes. 'Call me lucky'; I mean; come on!' Notwithstanding press releases and general columnists views Bing was definitely not a lazy guy who crooned because it was easier than working. In fact he was the busiest guy in Hollywood. Which our own knowledge of his records, radio and films output confirms. His breach of generational and racial division was also an endearing factor; 'He appealed to everyone' said Gary.

So why does he need explaining to a younger audience? Ken Crossland: Sadly his later image of dreadful orange juice commercials and an old guy in a sweater presenting an annual Christmas show at a time when stereo, Sinatra and the rock and roll era grew apace meant that Bing was decidedly old hat. His 'father image' , particularly in relation to son Gary Crosby's book , was also delved into, and Gary Giddins covered that more than adequately, especially with Bing's determination to be around for his second family.



Ken Crossland (centre) with producer Roy Oakshott (left) and writer Russell Davies (right) meet at the BBC to discuss the planned tribute.

From time to time Bing was heard reminiscing on his life and times, especially with his schooldays, his debating and use of words. Carroll Carroll picked up on this inflated language for his scripted radio shows of which an example was featured. Mary Carlisle came on to relate with some affectionate amusement how Bing failed to appear on time on the set for an early movie in which she co-starred - due to some heavy carousing the previous evening. 'A walking advertisement for Prohibition.' said Gary. Loyce Whiteman echoed this theme in connection with his period as a lead singer at the Cocoanut Grove, where she was also a featured

vocalist. This alcoholic influence caused some marital problems, as Malcolm Macfarlane explained when he related how Bing pursued his by now estranged wife to Mexico, kicked his drinking habit and crooned *"I Surrender, Dear"* in a 'kiss and make up' scene worthy of any Hollywood movie!

As a good light comedian with a flair for physical comedy, the Sennett Studios did well out him, as Pat explained, with a brief mention of the six two-reelers with that director. But it was still his recordings that were making musical history, as in 1932 with '.... the best scat solo after Armstrong and until Ella. There's a decade there when nothing can quite touch the scat solo of *"Some Of These Days"* - it's just a brilliant jazz record in every detail, and Bing is just swinging his socks off.', said Gary. 'But then he could turn around and do *"Brother Can You Spare A Dime"*, which is probably the most haunting song of the entire depression.', which recording virtually concluded part one; but with a promise from Pat Boone of much more to come next time in this song packed documentary, written by Russell Davies

Part two - and to the strains of *"Please"* Pat Boone opened with the words '... the story of the man who made popular singing possible for people like me, and Frank Sinatra and Elvis and everyone who sings melodic music. Bing showed us you could still sing with style and sound like a person talking sense.' Bing himself related how his early years spent in the professional company of the great musicians of the time helped fashion his singing style. Artie Shaw was lavish in his praise only slightly marred by his, and others, continual need in this type of programme to dwell on Bing's drinking habits. If his life style, haunts and similar associates [for one doesn't go carousing on one's own] were in any way responsible for the development of his voice and delivery then we should all be grateful for his revelling!

Eddie Lang was certainly a steadying influence and was undoubtedly a good friend whose death changed the direction of Bing's career forever. It became goodbye jazz and hello Kapp, his Decca boss who wanted a middle of the road performer with a considerable catalogue of records. Hits were not the object; if one came along it was a bonus. Malcolm explained the circumstances when Bing argued with Kapp, dug his heels in and was to sing only the one chorus of *"I Wished On the Moon"* which was featured to illustrate Bing's hollow victory, winning the battle but losing the war, as the record was not a good seller. More trouble arose when he refused to promote Chesterfield cigarettes for Mother's Day; his own mother being very anti-smoking.

"Empty Saddles" introduced his 'cowboy years' and how he influenced the self-styled country and western singers. It also heralded the arrival of Johnny Mercer in Bing's life with *"I'm An Old Cowhand"*, which number from RHYTHM ON THE RANGE set the talented Mercer on the road to greater fame.

Bing sings 'I'm An Old Cowhand' watched by a blurred Roy Rogers on guitar and Louis Prima on trumpet.

Bing's first million seller was Academy Award winning *"Sweet Leilani"*, which he had insisted on being included in the film WAIKIKI WEDDING against the wishes of the producer. Obviously a commercial success but a dubious winner over the similarly nominated *"They Can't Take That Away From Me"* and *"That Old Feeling"*.

Author Michael Brooks had an unfortunate experience when he failed to get an interview with Crosby, getting a resounding 'No' and the famous icy blue stare to boot! I guess it's just not possible to be Mr. Nice Guy every minute of every day. But Bing certainly enjoyed his professional relationships with the likes of Hope, Mercer and Boswell. That he liked his ad lib dialogue was well illustrated by Connee's reminiscing on their musical partnership on many tracks both on record and radio. Cue *"Basin St. Blues"*.

We've heard before that Bing was averse to the 'I love you' lyric' and again we know how Van Heusen had to circumvent this romanticism with the likes of *"Moonlight Becomes You"* and others. At the age of 100 Adolph Zukor was heard to expand on Pat Boone's commentary as to how Bing's personality as presented on stage, screen and records had all come together as one image. The relaxed 'one of the fellas' persona and definitely not the ardent matinee idol type. 'He was an odd fellow who'd much rather listen to his faults than praise', said Zukor.

Radio led the way, said Ken Carpenter. The freewheeling character picked up by script writer Carroll Carroll and subconsciously honed by Bing that was soon to find its way on to the screen especially with the Road movies.

Part Three began with Pat telling us that Bing taught the world to sing - naturally. He sang as if bursting in to song was the natural thing to do, and Bing was a persuasive teacher. Some discussion ensued on Bing's role in the film GOING MY WAY. Jimmy Van Heusen, Bob Crosby, Gary Giddins and Bing himself were heard discussing this breakaway role and the sudden emergence of Bing as the most famous Irish-American, despite there never once having been any vestige of this in the previous fifteen years of his career. A crafty move by Crosby who, said Gary Giddins, suggested to Jack Kapp setting up a recording session with Victor Young to record a couple of Irish numbers as early as 1940.

Anne Shelton's little story of the *"Easter Parade"* get-together had another, well deserved musical outing again, swiftly followed by Ken Crossland relating how, in 1945, Decca was promoting Bing as the man whose voice had been heard more than any human being who had ever lived. And once more the story of Bing's involvement in the development of recording tape was explained to listeners and how the first ever recorded broadcast took place on the 28th August 1947 and went out on the air on the 1st October. Bing's first song via this new media being, by the way, *"My Heart Is A Hobo"*. Al Jolson was soon to be a regular guest, following on the success of his biographical film and an opportunity to feature them together was presented.

To prove that his Academy Award was not a fluke producer/director George Seaton thought that Bing was an appropriate actor to play the lead in LITTLE BOY LOST; and remarked on the sadness of Dixie's death being reflected in the way Bing played his demanding role. Subsequently, Grace Kelly was heard relating how her brother thought it one of the wonders of modern times that she received a gold disc for her limited involvement with *"True Love"* and, inevitably, suggestions of romantic dalliances with her and others in the post Dixie Lee period were touched upon.

Bing felt fondly of his *"Well, Did You Evah?"* duet with Frank Sinatra and Gary Giddins explained how relaxed Bing is in this scene as opposed to Frank who appears rather jittery. Fair doo's though, Frank was supposed to be pretty tipsy ! Rosemary Clooney told how their song selection for both radio and recordings was a free and easy arrangement and that they blended so well together. Both segments being appropriately illustrated with recordings to match the dialogue.

Kathryn Crosby came on to say that Bing wrote love letters like weather reports and how their protracted on - off relationship finally led to the altar with Bing having eventually overcome the difficulty he had with saying 'I love you'. She explained how his second marriage and new family gave him a whole new and more relaxed lease of life. *"Tomorrow's My Lucky Day"* seemed the suitable track to play here and, interestingly, we were to hear Eamonn Andrews interrupting Bing on the set of THE ROAD TO HONG KONG to talk of his prowess around some English golf courses; Bing modestly dismissing his favourable scores as usual. By now Bing considered himself semi-retired and, as Ken Crossland explained actually had 'Actor' written in his passport. He didn't want to sing. He'd lost confidence in himself as a singer and by the early sixties had somehow become an old man. This was reiterated by Malcolm who felt that his health had suffered in that decade by operations and subsequent pain. But his appearance in ROBIN AND THE 7 HOODS, particularly the "Mister Booze" song, rescued his career and may have been the catalyst for his eventual stage appearances. What was a great mystery in the series though, especially at this juncture, was the complete omission of any mention of the six albums that he made with Ken Barnes and Pete Moore and his two seasons at the London Palladium!

Sixty-one songs were featured throughout the series, though only a very few in full. But that's all right since that number of tracks would have filled the three hours without any dialogue. Sometimes, though, one wonders if it might be best to let Bing's recorded work speak for itself. But this is not intended as a criticism as we should be grateful to the producer, writer and narrator for bringing to the public attention a generally satisfying and pretty accurate account of the life and times of one Harry Lillis Crosby. A unique human being.

BARNSEY AT THE BEEB

Always to be relied upon to support and promote Bing and the ICC, Paul's 'Gold For Grown Ups' Sunday night programme came up with a winner with over two hours of music and chat in recognition of the previous day's anniversary. As guests Paul had 78rpm record collector Arthur Badrock and the Eastern counties regional band leader John Petters on board. So between the three of them there was plenty of experience and

knowledge of vintage music, with the accent on jazz.. As an opener Paul featured *"From Monday On"* by the Bobby Gordon Band on a current CD entitled 'Tribute To Bing Crosby' before switching to the Whiteman version featuring our man. Noting that Bing was an instinctive jazz man some classic Crosby numbers such as *"St. Louis Blues"*, *"Changes"* and the *"Mississippi Mud"* version with 'Mr. Tram' were presented, all with intelligent and astute comments about the tracks, the musicianship and Bing's close involvement with many of the jazz musicians of that era. From around the time of the Crosby - Ellington relationship a certain Melville Brown, film director on *Check And Double Check*, was to say of Bing: 'This guy can't sing a note on his own. Get me the other two.' I wonder what happened to him, remarked Paul!

There were anecdotes from Hoagy Carmichael, Bob Crosby and John Scott Trotter. And our own Stan White on meeting Bing and Kathryn at Claridges. Twenty-two tracks were played; uninterrupted and in full, closing with the Eddie Condon backed *"Personality"*. Drummer, John Petters, is currently taking his band around the east of England counties with a Crosby Centenary Show. A satisfying combination being both a Crosby admirer and in a position to be able to bring Bing's music to interested audiences at many venues.

In the following weeks Paul played more Crosby and said that any number of listeners had contacted him in appreciation of an excellent tribute programme, including a letter from Trevor Wagstaff who said 'Let's not leave it another fifty years!'

JAZZ LEGENDS - BING CROSBY

Another excellent look at Bing's jazz roots occurred on Friday afternoon, 2nd. May , on BBC Radio 3 when Julian Joseph and Geoffrey Smith explored 'the jazz recordings of the American entertainer who was born 100 years ago.': to quote from the *Radio Times*. From Whiteman to Hampton takes in a lot of Crosby country, but good use was made of the available material from the BBC's record library. Julian observed that on *"Ol' Man River"* Whiteman took it up-tempo and up half an octave despite Bing's wonderful bass voice, though his range ably coped with Whiteman's required dance band version of the 'SHOWBOAT' song. The two presenters noted that opposed to Jolson, Bing sang to you not at you. They liked Bing's sense of phrasing, as imposed on *"Mary [What Are You Waiting For?]"* and his amazing nonchalance expressed in *"St. Louis Blues"* where he mixes it with the Ellington musicians. Several other recordings took followers of the programme through the years to the score from 'HIGH SOCIETY', most of which aficionados of the Crosby jazz catalogue will be able to pencil in here as required listening!

RUSSELL DAVIES

.... who is one of the mainstays for some regular Crosby on national radio summed up Bing's career by first playing *"There's Nothing That I Haven't Sung About"*. Thereafter, his dozen or so featured items of song catered for his regular 'classics and curiosities' theme. Fluffs of both *"Meadowlark* and *"Put It There, Pal"* and Bing's Sinatra parody of *"Don't Fence Me In"* were typical examples, as was Frank's reference to Bing in his recording of *"These Foolish Things"* While an interesting comparison of Bob Crosby duetting with Georgia Gibbs on *"Play A Simple Melody"* illustrated Bob's rather bland delivery compared with his older brother. Russell was another who expanded upon Bing's dislike of the 'I love you' syndrome, and through the Cole Porter song of that very title was able to illustrate that even there the lyric allowed Bing to convey the message by a sort of metaphysical proxy. A nice tribute from the man who also wrote the three part BBC R2 special.

ESSEX BOYS ON AIR

Tuesday 28th January, and by invitation Trevor Wagstaff and I met up at Wally Oldfield's house to participate in a BBC Essex centennial programme produced by Oliver Rogers. Ollie, as he is known to all, set us at ease and prompted several anecdotal remembrances of Bing to include in his Crosby special appropriately entitled 'The Story Of The 20th Century's Greatest Singer'. Originally scheduled for 3rd May the programme went out midday on the 21st. April. The broadcast followed a more anecdotal than factual pattern, with further contributions from Bing's` nephew Howard and from Ken Barnes who quoted Bing's response to Ken's suggestion of more emotion in a particular number. 'I'm in tune, you can hear the words and my phrasing's not bad.', said Bing; who continued 'Remember Ken, the name's Crosby, not Sinatra.' Excerpts and complete songs were featured, including *"I've Got The Girl"* and *"Dinah"*, which Howard preceded with a chorus of his own to illustrate the family resemblance. Howard went on to explain he would be tootling a tune or two at Gonzaga. Wally weighed in with the recollection of he and John Bassett meeting Bing at his hotel just a day or two before his death, where they recorded a message for the ICC and which had it's first public airing on Ollie's programme. Trevor likened *"Moonlight Becomes You"* from 'Morocco' to Romeo and Juliet's balcony scene - which is a good analogy - and paid particular homage to Bing's 'GOING MY WAY' role and *"Silent Night'* in particular. That Bing telephoned me on learning I was not well enough to attend the last Palladium concert illustrated to the programme's listeners Bing's likeable consideration of his fans. Before fading out with *"White Christmas"* Ken was again on hand to relate how Bing refused to re-record the number in stereo: 'I'd only be in competition with myself', said Bing. 'Anything else, but not that.' Ollie is a young man - early 'Twenties - but he was keen to learn about Bing and put together an excellent sixty minutes of recollected Crosbyana. He should go far!

DER BINGLE DAY BY DAY

Ken Crossland was equally busy on Saga 105.7 fm promoting Bing on five consecutive days leading up to his birthday. Each day from Monday 28th April through till Friday 2nd May, Ken was on for around ten minutes tracing Bing's career in each of his five decades from the 'Thirties forward with a representative track appropriate to the period. Thus we had *"May I"; "Moonlight Becomes You"; "Have You Met Miss Jones; "The Oldest*

Established" and *"That's What Life Is All About"*. Ken is an experienced professional at broadcasting, and although he had only a total of an hour to present his tribute he packed in a lot of information in such an interesting way that listeners must have been looking forward to the following day's instalment. The programme was repeated in full on Sunday the 4th. May. Following which Ken was also a guest on the Record Collectors programme where he engaged in conversation with the presenter, Chris Davis, with an in-depth, one hour dissertation on the impact that Bing had on the popular music scene and his influence on those who followed.

PRIME TIME RADIO

This is a satellite channel which had the distinction of including Malcolm Macfarlane, Ken Barnes, Pete Moore, Howard Crosby and Bing's other biographer, Charles Thompson, among it's knowledgeable line-up of participants. At the risk of being repetitious one can only state that once again an engrossing two-parter, which went out on the 3rd. and 4th. May, made for required listening for any Crosbyphile worthy of their salt. With fifteen tracks to musically illustrate the dialogue in the two hours it can be seen that there was a lot of discussion on Bing's career, both in and out of the recording studios to muse upon. Not least of which was Ken Barnes' comment that apart from being a singer Bing was also an actor, entertainer, sportsman, entrepreneur and business magnate. A telling tribute to Bing's recognition and enduring popularity came towards the close of the broadcast when it was revealed that in 1975 *"White Christmas"* was played to American troops in Vietnam to signal that the evacuation should begin.

Another BBC programme that had the distinction of including our Editor went out on 2nd. May on Greater Manchester Radio, or GMR as it is known. The programme was The Late Show, with Nick Robins, and had forty minutes of Crosby packed information, anecdotes and music. Malcolm related Bing's unique achievements and explained his jazz roots. Stephanie Plowman joined Malcolm in a hook-up from Washington State where she is the Crosby Museum Archivist at Gonzaga University. She explained that numbering among the many items of memorabilia housed there, and on display, were Bing's 22 Gold records, his Oscar and four toupees. Nick was on hand in this three way conversation and made it known to listeners that *"Have You Met Miss Jones?"* was included in the featured records just to prove that it didn't start with Robbie Williams!

PATIENTS REWARDED

Geoff Rose is an experienced broadcaster and ICC member who hosted a Bristol Hospital Radio tribute to Bing on the 1st May. A really enjoyable sixty minutes packed with representative music and relevant, historical information. All of which was enhanced by the fact that Geoff kept to his self-imposed constraint of absolutely no reference to youthful excesses, family difficulties or *affaire de coeur*. With fifteen complete recordings, from *"Side By Side"* through to *"There's Nothing That I Haven't Sung About"*, and a fade out on *"Blue Of the Night"*, it is apparent that the patients were more than well entertained on that occasion!

Serendipity is, I believe, the right word to describe my discovery that Bing's *"Shell Song"* was included in a TV programme that I recorded celebrating 100 favourite television advertisements. Bing came in at number 82, and while it wasn't shown in full (few were) it was a delightful surprise to find him among some really memorable ads, many of which were superior to the programmes they had been interrupting!

Meanwhile, *Radio Times*, Britain's premier and the world's oldest programmes magazine, carried a paragraph within their 'Not A Lot Of People Know That' column [think Michael Caine] which noted that Bing was the only film star from 1915 to 1980 to top the U.S. annual box-office charts five times, and that he also topped the U.S. record charts a record 42 times and had an incredible total of 368 hit singles. An unbeatable feat one would imagine.

A HOST OF ANGELS

Can you imagine a radio station playing 179 - that's *one hundred and seventy-nine* - Bing tracks through the night! Well, move to Southampton, in Hampshire and you too can be a listener to Angel Radio where Der Bingle is the most consistently played artiste on this non-commercial channel. I'm informed by one of its presenters, Jim Reilly, that the programme line-up for their Bing Day was as follows:

1. Good Morning 7.30 - 8 a.m. Presented by Jim Reilly.
2. Western Round-Up 10- 11 a.m. Jim again.
3. Saturday Cinema 11 - Noon. Jim one of two presenters.
4. Afternoon Requests 2 p.m. - 4 p.m. but extended to accommodate all the incoming Crosby requests.
5. Music Box. Bing The Early Years 4.30 - 5 p.m. non-stop Bing
6. Bing Sings 6 - 7 p.m. Presented by Stan White
7. Angel Through The Night 11p.m. - 8 a.m. non-stop Bing [179 tracks]

I'll eat my wind-up Victrola if anyone can come up with a greater 24 hour Bing festival than this!

TWO BOYS AND A MICROPHONE

Once billed here as 'The Likely Lads' Arthur Blood and Maurice Beardmore have been carrying on their regular Radio Derby 'act', just reminiscing and chin-wagging on the Crosby years. This time with some enjoyable rarities and variation from the norm for listeners to Mike Carey's 'Memorable Melodies' Sunday show, broadcast, on this occasion on 4th. May. *"All The World Is Singing Boo, Boo, Boo"*, the *"Shell Song"*, *"Dearie"*, with Ethel Merman, *"With A Song In My Heart"* from the wartime Services Club U.K., and *"Enjoy Yourself, It's Later Than You Think"* with brother Bob featured among the regular recordings. A touching tribute from Peggy Lee followed the playing of *"The Possibility's There"* when she related how after telling Bing she had never heard *"Down By The River"* since seeing the film he took her, after a recording, to the nearest nightclub in San Francisco, spoke to the pianist,

and sang it all the way through especially for her. *"Come Share The Wine"* was an appropriate closer for this dissertation on the life and times of The Old Groaner.

Further afield in other counties and regions of the United Kingdom some fourteen hours of tributes were heard on or around the special day. Two good friends of the ICC are David Lowe and Chris Robinson who between them logged three hours, with the latter featuring excerpts from Bing's radio shows, all provided by Maggie Ryan. Henry Ayrton, Gerald Jackson and Frank Wappat each presented an hour of Mr. C, while Mesdames Judith Ley, Anne Hopper and Christine Prentice chalked up a couple of hours between them. Anne having secured the services of Ken Barnes in a prerecorded interview. Regular readers of this column will be aware of the various stations and programme titles that these good folk broadcast under. And, of course, we mustn't overlook our Scotland based Radio 2 man, Desmond Carrington; he of the regular Sunday slot for dear old Bing. What a wonderful thing that so many radio folk were more than happy to commemorate the occasion with words and music here in Britain. But as you will read, much was happening Stateside, too.

THE BREEZE

An aptly named radio station which is in Plymouth, Illinois, not a million miles from 'The Windy City' up there on the shores of Lake Michigan. Greg Van Beek, who hails from West Bend, in the adjacent State pulled off a great coup in promoting Bing's centenary on David Hendrickson's four hour Drive Time programme from 5 to 9 a.m. on the 2nd. May. The entire musical content of the show was given over to Bing's records, with interpolations from Greg between tunes, the usual rush hour traffic reports, the weather, news headlines and breaks for ads. The sort of programme listened to by thousands of commuters on any busy morning as they head for their place of work. Greg was to say that Bing would be embarrassed by all the attention, and was asked how he, a young guy in his early Thirties, came to be a fan of Mr. Crosby. Greg said he'd never heard of Bing until he started collecting old radio shows when some of Bing's came to his attention. He was hooked from then on!

There were a couple of nice tributes from Rosemary Clooney: one from her last concert in Honolulu, Hawaii, where she dedicated *"Ol Man River"* to Bing, and then again by way of a 'Tribute To Bing Crosby' album that she put together. 'Bing was such a good actor that sometimes people forgot how good a singer he was.', she said. The only other non-Bing track was *"Learn To Croon"* from Mel Tormé's excellent tribute CD.

When asked if Bing's legacy had survived into the electronic age Greg replied that Bing will always be remembered, especially at Christmas time, and that his recordings on compact discs numbered hundreds, and that there were an increasing number of DVDs of his films becoming available. Duets with Astaire, Sinatra, Jolson the Mills Brothers, and Miss Clooney, as well as any number of solo recordings, an excellent selection of post mid-Forties musical Crosbyana were made available to the 1420am listeners on that Friday morning, many of whom may never have heard Bing in such infinite variety before.

AC-CENT-CHU-ATE THE POSITIVE

Wig has already told us about some important radio broadcasts in the States and here are further details as supplied by various members, first **Arne Fogel**;
"My interview special with Gary Giddins which was originally recorded and presented on the Internet by the now defunct "Netradio" corporation, was aired on KBEM "Jazz88" FM on Sunday evening April 27th at 7pm central time (repeated Wednesday April 30th, 11pm central time). The program was available on the Internet on KBEM Jazz88's website the address of which is WWW.JAZZ88FM.COM . The show has now been absorbed into my series "Singers & Standards", which is heard every week at that time."

A typical Internet message leading up to the event came from **Tom Degan**, Goshen, NY on April 26:
"Well folks, we're just about a week away from the big day. 100 years, WOW! I'm sure if he were still with us he wouldn't look a day over 90. On May 3, at 7:00 AM EST until 11:00 AM (with a half hour break between 9:00 and 9:30) I'll be co-hosting, along with Dick Wells a tribute to Bing. We'll be playing a lot of rarely-heard recordings, going all the way back to 'I've Got The Girl', his first recording from 18 October 1926. You can listen to this milestone of sophisticated broadcasting (all right, a little over the top but it'll be fun) by going to www.wtbq.com and clicking the on the air icon (or whatever the heck it's called). If you live in the Orange County (NY) area, there'll also be a mass in Bing's memory at 5:00 PM that day at St. John The Evangelist Church in Goshen, NY. Hope everyone has a great week!"

And from **Martin McQuade** we were to pick up the following advance notice on May 1.
"Radio station KIDD in Monterey Calif. is planning a 4-hour tribute to Bing Sat. morning. I'll be providing an interview by phone and I put Mrs. Crosby in touch with the station — she'll be appearing telephonically as well. Joe Franklin is hosting a radio tribute Sun. morning on WOR, 710 AM on New York radio from approx. 1 A.M. to 5 A. M. Tentatively I will be appearing by phone on that as well. Radio station KIDD (Magic 63), Monterey, Calif, will air a tribute to Bing on Sat., May 3 from 8A.M to Noon Pacific time. Kathryn Crosby and Nicki Foster (Peggy Lee's daughter) will be interviewed by phone. I am scheduled to call in at 10:45 A.M., Pacific time. For more information see Magic 63.com."

Also from the States, **Judy Schmid** reports that her local NPR station webcast some Crosby broadcasts that began on 1st. April. The celebration climaxed on Bing's centennial with the following shows. Original broadcast dates shown in U.S. format.

1. GULF SCREEN GUILD SHOW Hugh Herbert, Bing, Jane Withers, George Murphy 2/5/39
2. BING CROSBY SHOW Dinah Shore, William Boyd 4/4/51
3. LUX RADIO THEATRE 'She Loves Me Not' Bing, Joan Blondell, Nan Grey, Sterling Holloway

11/8/37

4. LADY ESTHER SCREEN GUILD PLAYERS 'Going My Way' Barry Fitzgerald, George Murphy C 1/8/45

5. KRAFT MUSIC HALL Bing, Al Jolson 1/15/48

6. LADY ESTHER SCREEN GUILD PLAYERS 'Bells of St. Mary's' Bing, Ingrid Bergman 8/26/46

7. CATHOLIC CHARITIES SPECIAL 'A Question of Pianos' Bing, Maureen O'Sullivan, Jimmy Durante, Bob Hope, Ann Blyth 4/18/48

8. WALTER O'KEEFE'S ALMANAC Bing Crosby interviewed 12/62

9. LUX RADIO THEATRE 'Sing You Sinners' Bing, Joan Caulfield 5/7/45

10. VFW GOLDEN JUBILEE SHOW Bing, Dinah Shore, Dennis Day, Bob Crosby 1949

AT THE FLICKS

By way of a special celebration of the May event, Halstead cinema in Essex screened HIGH SOCIETY, and as the audience left, BBC Essex Radio were there asking what they'd thought of it. The overriding response was that they don't write music like that anymore.

U.K. TV screened BLUE SKIES and two of the ROAD films to tie in with Bob Hope's remarkable birthday, which was also celebrated with a Saturday night one hour special on BBC1. The BBC2 programme "Living Famously - Bing Crosby" was also shown again in the UK. U.S. TV screened most of the usual regulars with, again, Bob Hope films that had some cameo Crosby. By and large, though, TV was lacking in response to the 100th Anniversary of the world's greatest and most innovative entertainer of the 20th Century. But, as this issue of BING magazine has shown, the unfolding revelation is that despite the unfortunate changes in musical culture the Legend lives on.

Bert Bishop, June 2003

(Editor: Bert has done very well to summarise the vast coverage of Bing's centenary but we know that we shall have omitted tributes so we apologise in advance to those who have been overlooked on this occasion. TCM in the USA had a mini Crosby festival on May 2 when they showed six Bing films and they were nicely linked by the presenter but, as Bert says, it was disappointing that the main channels in the USA did not have any coverage. They did celebrate Bob Hope's centennial though and I saw a nice tribute on CNN by Larry King whilst I was still in the USA. NBC put on a appropriate programme too and Greg Van Beek sent us this short review.)

100 Years of Hope & Humor

Stars pay homage to patriot, humanitarian and entertainer Bob Hope, who will turn 100 on May 29. Host: Jane Pauley.

The 2-hour NBC special on Sunday April 20 celebrating Hope's centennial was fairly enjoyable. Bing was well represented, and even a few uncommon clips with him were screened, including the boxing match from the 1968 Madison Square Garden opening and the vaudeville sketch from Bob's February 1969 Special. The latter was aired in b/w instead of color, probably to blend in with the other clips shown around it (1932 Capitol theater silent home movies and vaudeville segment from *Road To Zanzibar*) and appear older than it really was. Still, the special doesn't compare to the efforts staged for Hope's 85th and 90th birthdays. A pity Dolores or any other of Bob's family members didn't make an appearance.

Greg Van Beek

ONCE IN A WHILE

Personalities associated with Bing who have died since our last issue was prepared include:

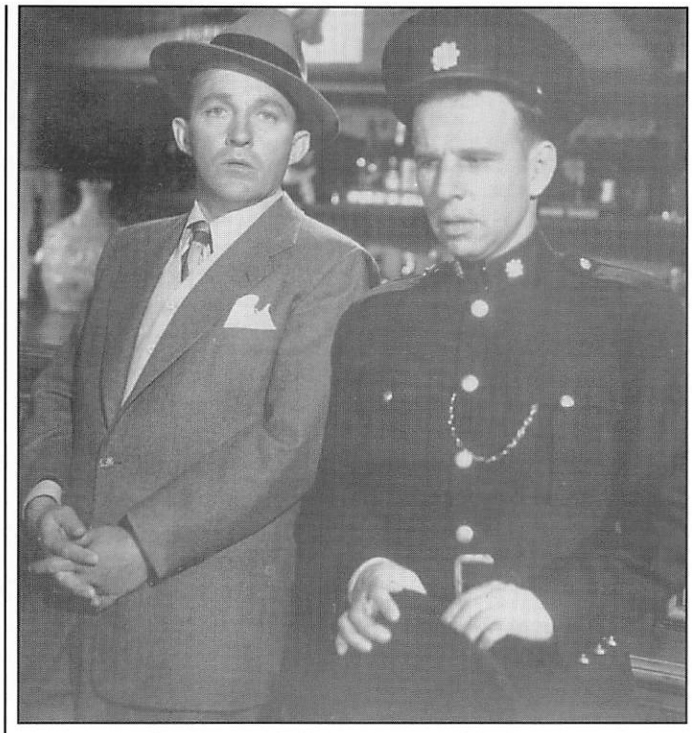
Robert Stack, died on May 15, aged 84. In his early screen career, he gave popular young actress Deanna Durbin her much-publicized first screen kiss in *First Love*, and played a series of youthful romantic leads before leaving Hollywood to serve with the Navy as an aerial gunnery instructor in World War II. His postwar career climbed in the 1950s with meatier roles and better projects, including *The High and the Mighty* starring John Wayne in 1954. In 1957, Stack was nominated for a best supporting Oscar for *Written on the Wind*, a domestic melodrama starring Lauren Bacall and Rock Hudson. In all he made more than 40 films, including *The Iron Glove* (1954); *Good Morning Miss Dove* (1955) and *Is Paris Burning?* (1966). In later years he shifted to comedy, mocking his stalwart image in 1980's *Airplane!* and appearing in *1941* (1979), *Caddyshack II* (1988) and *Baseketball* (1998). His TV role as Ness in "The Untouchables" brought him a best actor Emmy in 1960. His first contact with Bing was when he played the part of the athletic Jeff Blake in *Mr. Music* (1950) and in later years he was a regular competitor in the Bing's Pro-Am at Pebble Beach.

Robert Stack as seen in 'Mr Music'

Gregory Peck was taken from us in June at the age of

87. He was best known for film roles of dignified statesmen and people who followed a strong code of ethics, for example a magazine reporter confronting anti-Semitism in *Gentleman's Agreement* (1947, a best picture Oscar winner), a military officer in *The Guns of Navarone* (1961) and the president of the United States in *Amazing Grace and Chuck* (1987). But he also could play against type. He was a conflicted father in the original *Cape Fear* (1962) and a Nazi in *The Boys From Brazil* (1978), the latter against Laurence Olivier's Nazi hunter. He also gave an air of wondrous bemusement to his reporter in Audrey Hepburn's first major film, *Roman Holiday* (1953), for which Hepburn won an Oscar. All told, Peck was nominated for five Academy Awards. He was rightly acclaimed for his Oscar-winning portrayal of upstanding Southern lawyer Atticus Finch in *To Kill A Mockingbird* (1962) and also he was nominated for *The Keys of the Kingdom* (1945), *The Yearling* (1946), *Gentleman's Agreement* and *Twelve O'Clock High* (1949). Undoubtedly he will be especially remembered for *To Kill a Mockingbird.* In the film, based on the award-winning Harper Lee novel, Peck played a small-town Southern lawyer who defies public sentiment to defend a black man accused of rape. "I put everything I had into it — all my feelings and everything I'd learned in 46 years of living, about family life and fathers and children," he told the Associated Press in 1989. "And my feelings about racial justice and inequality and opportunity." Peck's life was as dignified as his most notable film roles. He served as president of the Motion Picture Academy of Arts and Sciences and was active in the Motion Picture and Television Fund, American Cancer Society, National Endowment for the Arts and other causes. Surprisingly he and Bing never worked with each other directly although they did appear separately in shows such as the USO special in 1958. However they dined and golfed together on occasions notably in England and France when on vacation.

Hume Cronyn, 91, a celebrated actor whose intelligent style made him a splendid sparring partner for his actress wife, the graceful Jessica Tandy, died on June 15. The Cronyns appeared together in more than 10 stage shows. Mr. Cronyn himself was a compelling character actor in films and he received an Academy Award nomination for best supporting actor in one of his first screen roles, as a German who awakens to the dangers of fascism in *The Seventh Cross* (1944), which starred Spencer Tracy. Among his other memorable roles in the 1940s were the murder-plot enthusiast in Alfred Hitchcock's *Shadow of a Doubt* and the radio operator in Hitchcock's *Lifeboat*. He was a nimble lawyer in *The Postman Always Rings Twice* with John Garfield and Lana Turner as doomed killers, and a sadistic chief prison guard in *Brute Force* with criminal Burt Lancaster as his prey. Largely focused on stage work from the 1950s, he still did memorable film work, including in *Cleopatra* (1963) as Sosigenes, a key aide to Elizabeth Taylor's Cleopatra, *The Parallax View* (1974) as a skeptical newspaper editor; and in *Conrack* (1974) as a racist school superintendent. In the 1980s, he was in the hits *Cocoon* (1985), as a retirement home resident rejuvenated through alien technology, and *Batteries not included* (1987), where space visitors rescue him from eviction. The only time he appears to have worked with Bing was in *Top O' The Morning* in 1949 when he played Constable Hughie Devine alongside Barry Fitzgerald's Sergeant Briany McNaughton.



Hume Cronyn with Bing in 'Top O' The Morning'

Announcement

THE INTERNATIONAL CLUB CROSBY - UK Branch 1st. ANNUAL DINNER / MEETING THE MANSION, ROUNDHAY PARK, LEEDS, SUNDAY, OCTOBER 5th., 2003, 3pm - 10pm

A cordial and warm invitation is extended to all members, their partners and friends to attend our forthcoming dinner / meeting in the attractive setting of Roundhay Park, Leeds, UK. This is not only the first meeting under our new banner but also the 38th. annual dinner held in Leeds to celebrate Bing's life and times.

Menu

Roast Plum Tomato Soup with Fresh Basil Cream

Roast Leg of Lamb served on a bed of Buttered Cabbage, Caramelised Onions, Crispy Bacon Served with a RedcurrantGlaze

Fruit Crumble with Custard with Dairy cream

Fresh Ground coffee or tea & Mints

Please book by sending a cheque for £23.95 per person (£20.95 for the meal, £3 for expenses) to Michael Crampton. Accommodation may be available at Beechwood Hotel (tel. 0113 266 2578) or Rydal Bank Hotel (tel. 0113 266 1178). Y'All Come! You will be amongst friends.

Keeping Track

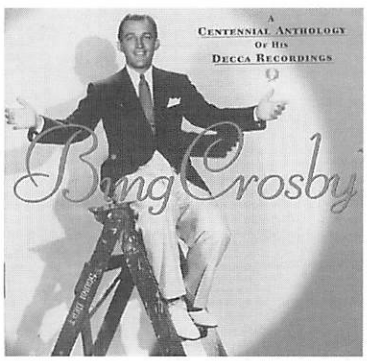
Our new reviewer of the new releases is none other than our previous Editor, Ken Crossland. Welcome back, Ken

And it's nice to be back. No radical changes planned, although as well as looking at what's new on CD and DVD, I thought it would also be fun to cast an eye over the Crosby memorabilia that has been up for sale on the various internet auction sites. But first, the new discs.

COMPACT DISCS

Bing Crosby - Another Ride in Cowboy Country Jasmine JASMCD3558 £6.99 UK
1. I'm An Old Cowhand 2. Be Honest With Me 3. Along The Santa Fe Trail 4. It Makes No Difference Now (B take) 5. San Antonio Rose 6. When The Bloom Is On The Sage 7. Walking The Floor Over You 8. Deep In The Heart Of Texas (KMH 26 Feb. 1942) 9. Careless Hands 10. Pistol Packin' Mama (with The Andrews Sisters) 11. Have I Told You Lately That I Love You (with The Andrews Sisters) 12. El Rancho Grande 13. Along The Navajo Trail (with The Andrews Sisters) 14. Riders In The Sky 15. Twilight On The Trail 16. Jingle Jangle Jingle (with Mary Martin - KMH 28 May 1942) 17. It's A Lonely Trail 8. Cool Water (with The Andrews Sisters) 19. Copper Canyon (Chesterfield, 22 Mar. 1950) 20. Dear Hearts And Gentle People 21. Sierra Sue 22. We'll Rest At The End Of The Trail
Another superb CD from the Geoff Milne / Jasmine combination. This follows on from 'Bing Crosby - Cowboy Country Crosby Style' which was reviewed in our last issue. All of the tracks are of very good quality and as always Geoff takes some beating for the standard of reproduction he obtains from early records. Also it's nice to have several rare radio tracks as part of this album. Detailed and informative notes by Geoff Milne complete the package. At a price of £6.99 and a running time of 62 minutes, this is good value for money.

Bing Crosby: A Centennial Anthology Of His Decca Recordings MCA-Decca 088-113-223-2 £15.99/$29.98 USA



We gave full details of this impending 2-CD release in our last edition and now that we have actually received the set we can consider it more fully. Wig Wiggins compiled and researched this excellent album for MCA-Decca and it is a superb and appropriate tribute to commemorate the centennial. The sleeve notes by Wig are comprehensive and well illustrated with interesting photos. Wig explained the basis of his selections in his article in our Spring issue and it makes a welcome change from the usual hackneyed choice. There will be those who will lament the absence of any unissued or particularly rare tracks but this issue is aimed at the general public and as such it contains most of the Crosby classics which the man-in-the-street wants to hear. The quality of the re-mastered tracks is very good indeed, although some tracks on CD2 have surface noise particularly "Blue Skies" and could perhaps have been improved. Well done Wig for getting this collection issued. It should sell well over the years. Running times - CD1: 75 minutes CD2: 73 minutes. Price: £15.99 or $29.98 but it can be obtained more cheaply in some outlets.

Still on the centenary theme, the following 4CD set retailing at £6.99 must offer some of the best value of the year.

Bing Crosby - The Centenary Collection: 4CD Pulse PBXCD471/4 £6.99 UK
Disc One - Hits 1. Swinging On A Star 2. Moonlight Becomes You 3. I'll Be Seeing You 4. Sunday, Monday, Or Always 5. Red Sails In The Sunset 6. Just One More Chance (1931 - radio) 7. Where The Blue Of The Night (1931 - A take) 8. Brother, Can You Spare A Dime? 9. Pennies From Heaven 10. Out Of Nowhere 11. Silent Night (1935) 12. Please (1932) 13. Mule Train 14. It's Easy To Remember 15. June In January 16. White Christmas (1947) 17. Don't Fence Me In 18. Along The Navajo Trail 19. Hot Time In The Town Of Berlin 20. (Get Your Kicks On) Route 66 21. South Rampart Street Parade 22. Quicksilver
Disc Two - Jazz 1. Yes Indeed! 2. After You've Gone 3. The Birth Of The Blues 4. You Must Have Been A Beautiful Baby 5. Sweet Georgia Brown 6. Someday, Sweetheart 7. On The Sunny Side Of The Street 8. St. Louis Blues 9. Your Socks Don't Match 10. Mississippi Mud (W40034-A) 11. I Ain't Got Nobody 12. Tea For Two 13. When My Dreamboat Comes Home 14. I Still Suits Me 15. Gone Fishin' 16. People Will Say We're In Love 17. The Eagle And Me 18. I Love You (Grieg) 19. Close As Pages In A Book 20. If I Loved You 21. I've Never Been In Love Before 22. Some Enchanted Evening
Disc Three - Standards 1. You Brought A New Kind Of Love To Me 2. Night And Day 3. A Nightingale Sang In Berkeley Square 4. Summertime 5. How Deep Is The Ocean? 6. Wrap Your Troubles In Dreams (1931) 7. The Folks Who Live On The Hill 8. Let's Do It (Let's Fall In Love)(1929) 9. A Ghost Of A Chance 10. Star Dust (1939) 11. Long Ago (And Far Away) 12. A Gal In Calico 13. Embraceable You 14. Old Folks 15. Autumn Leaves 16. Just One Of Those Things 17. But Beautiful 18. I've Got A Pocketful Of Dreams 19. Only Forever 20. She Reminds Me Of You 21. Be Careful, It's My Heart 22. Zing A Little Zong

Disc Four 1. Dinah (with the Mills Brothers) 2. A Couple Of Song-And-Dance Men (with Fred Astaire) 3. Mine (with Judy Garland) 4. Sam's Song (with Gary Crosby) 5. Do You Ever Think Of Me? (with The Merry Macs) 6. Mister Meadowlark (with Johnny Mercer) 7. It's Been A Long, Long Time (with Les Paul Trio) 8. The Way You Look Tonight (with Dixie Lee Crosby) 9. The Spaniard That Blighted My Life (with Al Jolson) 10. Prove It By The Things You Do (with Mel Torme) 11. Basin Street Blues (with Connee Boswell) 12. Once And For Always (with Rhonda Fleming) 13. Busy Doing Nothing (with Sir Cedric Hardwicke & William Bendix) 14. If I Were A Bell (with Patty Andrews) 15. Put It There, Pal (with Bob Hope) 16. I Can't Begin To Tell You (with Carmen Cavallaro) 17. I'm Falling In Love With Someone (with Frances Langford) 18. In The Cool, Cool, Cool Of The Evening (with Jane Wyman) 19. When Irish Eyes Are Smiling 20. The Rose Of Tralee 21. How Can You Buy Killarney? 22. Galway Bay

Again on the theme of value for money, the enterprising Naxos label has now moved away from its classical roots and is issuing a range of early vocal recordings, with two from Bing on their May list. If you have the Chronological series, then you will have these, but if not, they are good value at £4.99 each. Generally very good quality with only a few tracks having noticeable surface noise.

The Earliest Bing Crosby Vol 1 Rhythm King 1926-1930 Naxos 8120696 £4.99 UK
1. I've Got The Girl 2. Pretty Lips (38124-1) 3. Side By Side (-4) 4. Magnolia 5. Mississippi Mud/I Left My Sugar Standing In The Rain (39271-3) 6. Sweet Lil/Ain't She Sweet (-3) 7. The Five Step (-3) 8. It Won't Be Long Now (-8) 9. Miss Annabelle Lee 10. Sunshine (-3) 11. What Price Lyrics? 12. That's My Weakness Now 13. Wa Da Da 14. Out O'Town Gal 15. That's Grandma 16. Rhythm King 17. Louise (148428-2) 18. I Like To Do Things For You 19. A Bench in The Park (149840-4) 20. Them There Eyes
Running time: 62 minutes

The Earliest Bing Crosby Vol 2 Wrap Your Troubles In Dreams 1927- 1931 Naxos 8120697 £4.99 UK
1. Make Believe 2. Mary (What Are You Waiting For) (-2) 3. I'm Winging Home (-2) 4. I'm Afraid Of You (-4) 5. Louisiana (-1) 6. Get Out And Get Under The Moon 7. Because My Baby Don't Mean Maybe Now 8. I'm On The Crest Of a Wave 9. Tain't So Honey, Tain't So 10. I'm Crazy Over You 11. The Spell Of The Blues 12. My Kinda Love (148073-3) 13. Can't We Be Friends 14. If I Had a Talking Picture Of You 15. Livin' In The Sunlight, Lovin' In The Moonlight 16. The Little Things In Life 17. One More Time 18. Wrap Your Troubles In Dreams 19. Just A Gigolo 20. I'm Gonna Get You
Running time: 61 minutes

From another label specialising in out of copyright material, we have the following two items.

Bing Crosby - On The Road To Victory Newsound NST 133 £6.99 UK
1. (There'll Be Bluebirds Over) The White Cliffs of Dover 2. The Army Air Corps Song 3. Yankee Doodle Dandy 4.I Don't Want To Walk Without You Baby 5. Song of Freedom 6. You'd Be So Nice To Come Home To 7. What Do You Do In The Infantry? 8. Riding Herd On A Cloud Tonight 9. The Road to Victory 10. Sunday, Monday, or Always 11.The Victory Polka 12. It's All Over Now 13. As Times Goes By 14. I'll Be Seeing You 15. Shoo Shoo Baby 16. (There'll Be A) Hot Time In The Town of Berlin 17. Song of The Bombardiers 18. Long Ago and Far Away

Copy of this not to hand but looks like wartime material, mostly from KMH I would imagine. From the same label, we also have:

Bing Crosby - Legacy Newsound NST052 £6.99 UK
1. Swinging On A Star 2. Moonlight Becomes You 3. Sweet Georgia Brown 4. Temptation 5. You're Getting To Be A Habit With Me 6. Too Marvellous For Words 7. Pennies From Heaven 8. You Must Have Been A Beautiful Baby 9. Summertime 10. The Very Thought Of You 11. Sunday, Monday or Always 12. I Ain't Got Nobody 13. April Played The Fiddle 14. The Folks Who Live On The Hill 15. With Every Breath I Take 16. The Touch Of Your Lips 17. But Not For Me 18. Somebody Loves Me 19. When Day Is Done 20. When The Moon Comes Over Madison Square 21. Birds Of A Feather 22. Still The Bluebird Sings 23. If I Had My Way 24. Too Romantic 25. New San Antonio Rose 26. You're A Sweet Little Headache 27. It's Always You 28. The Birth Of The Blues

Further details available at www.newsound2000.com

The Essential Bing Crosby Sony 85956 $11.99 USA
1. Dinah 2. Paradise 3. Sweet Georgia Brown 4. Love Me Tonight 5. Please 6. Here Lies Love 7. Brother Can You Spare A Dime 8. Young And Healthy 9. My Honey's Lovin' Arms 10. Blue Prelude 11. Thanks 12. Beautiful Girl 13. Temptation 14. Did You Ever See A Dream Walking 15. Love Thy Neighbor 16. Love In Bloom
This release has just appeared in the USA. It's familiar material again, but if you want the best of the early solo Bing on a single CD, this one's for you.

Classic Bing - 20 Classic Favourites Vols 1-3 **Mastersong 580182/1-3** **$12.95** **Australia**

Volume 1 1. Temptation 2. You're A Sweet Little Headache 3. East Side Of Heaven 4. So The Bluebirds and the Blackbirds 5. Please 6. Thanks 7. St. Louis Blues 8. Changing Partners 9. It Might As Well Be Spring 10. The Old Lamplighter / It's a Good Day 11. On A Slow Boat To China 12. Cuanto La Gusta 13. I Got The Sun In The Morning 14. Clancy Lowered The Boom 15. I'm On The Crest Of A Wave 16, Out Of Town Gal 17. At Twilight 18. This Is My Night To Dream 19. Black Moonlight 20, We'll Make Hay Whilst The Sun Shines

Volume 2 1. I'm An Old Cowhand 2. Dinah 3. Ciribiribin 4. Don't Fence Me In 5. Deep In The Heart Of Texas 6. Blues Medley 7. Mary (What Are You Waiting For) 8. The Last Round Up 9. Hello Hello 10. Great Day 11. Please 12. That Lucky Old Sun 13. If I Knew You Were Coming I'd Have Baked A Cake 14. Zip a Dee Doo Dah 15. On Top Of Old Smokey 16. Up A Lazy River/Paper Doll 17. How Are Things in Glocca Morra 18. The Jones Boy 19. You Gotta Start Off Each Day With A Song 20. May The God Lord Bless And Keep You

Volume 3 1. A Fine Romance 2. My Heart Is Taking Lessons 3. For Me And My Gal 4. I Love You 5. I Surrender Dear 6. Someday Sweetheart 7. Where The Blue Of The Night 8. Beautiful Girl 9. Did You Ever See A Dream Walking 10. She Reminds Me Of You 11. Love In Bloom 12. It's Only A Paper Moon 13. Hand Holdin' Music 14. Everybody Loves My Baby 15. If This Isn't Love 16. Louise / Mimi 17. Vaya Con Dios 18. Get Out And Get Under The Moon 19. A Bundle Of Old Love Letters 20. Tain't So Honey

I'm indebted to Ernest Sutkowski for the details of this set, which is available as three separate CDs, I believe from Edward R. Hamilton, Bookseller, Falls Village, CT. 06031-5000. I have to say it's a compilation that looks like it's been put together with a Hoover rather than anything resembling thought about the product because it gleefully combines 1950s radio with Twenties and Thirties commercial tracks. The highlight, according to Ernest is Track 11 on disc 2 which appears to be from a KMH medley from 5 December 1935.

Guest Appearances and others

Inevitably, Bob Hope's 100th birthday has seen a flood of audio and video releases. Here are just some of those with some Crosby content.

The Golden Age of Comedy **Pulse PLSCD627** **£4.99** **UK**

1. Hope & Crosby 2. Bob Hope Clothing Range (Sweet Violets) 3. Bob's Book (Put It There Pal) 4. Bing Wins Show 5. Road To Las Vegas (Las Vegas Town) 6. Just Plain Bing Morning Show 7. Beethoven & Von Crobine (Heine's & Moe's) 8. For What?

This looks a most interesting CD, containing just eight tracks, each of which is a radio sketch plus a song. And staying with the Hope centenary, Living Era have put out a CD of most of Bob's best known recordings, several of which of course feature Bing. Details are as follows:

Bob Hope - Thanks For The Memory **Living Era CDAJA5493** **£6.99** **UK**

1. Thanks For The Memory 2. Two Sleepy People 3. The Lady's In Love With You 4. Penthouse Serenade (When We're Alone) 5. Bob broadcasts to the US Army 6. Put it There Pal 7. Road To Morocco 8. My Favourite Brunette 9. Beside You 10. Buttons and Bows 11. That's Not The Knot 12. Heinie's and Moe's (Buttons and Bows) 13. Lucky Us 14. Ain't We Got Fun 15. Blind Date 16. Goodnight Irene 17. Home On The Range 18. Wing Ding 19. Am I In Love 20. Four Legged Friend 21. Hoots Mon 22. Chicago Style 23. Road To Bali 24. Merry Go Runaround 25. Bob broadcasts to the US Coast Guard

Bing features on tracks 6, 7, 12, 16, 17, 21, 22, 23 and 24

Also worth a look, especially if you are a Hope fan, are the following duo of releases from Radiospirits (www.radiospirits.com), a US company who specialize in resurrecting the classic days of American radio. Malcolm gave details of the first release in BING #132 but it won't hurt to briefly repeat the information here.

Legends of Radio: The Bob Hope Show **Radiospirits 40042 - 20CD set** **$69.98** **USA**
Legends of Radio: The Bob Hope Show **Radiospirits 47062 - 20CD set** **$69.98** **USA**

The first of these features two Hope shows with Bing as guest - 24 December 1946, and 2 October 1951, where Jane Russell also joins ol' ski nose. The second set features Bing as guest on a 29 May 1945 programme and on the show of 20 December 1949 with Rhonda Fleming. Whilst you are there, also check out

Hollywood Stars on Radio **Radiospirits 40022 - 20 CD set** **$69.98** **USA**

This set features the radio versions of some of Hollywood's major films and includes Bing's recreation of "Dixie" on the Lux Radio Theatre on 20 December 1943, with Dorothy Lamour helping out, "Going My Way" from 8 January 1945 and "The Bells of St. Mary's" co-starring Ingrid Bergman which was originally broadcast on August 26, 1946. Other stars and 'films' featured include Gary Cooper's role as Lou Gehrig in "The Pride Of The Yankees" and James Stewart in "It's a Wonderful Life". The sets look expensive but remember they work out around £3 per CD which isn't bad and these are "proper" audio CDs not computer only mp3 formats.

Moving on from Mr Hope, here's a very unusual item. How many members of the Crosby clan can you name who have sung on record? I make it 10 - Dixie and Kathryn, each of the seven children plus Bing's younger brother Bob. Now there's another name to add to the list in that of Howard Crosby, Bing's nephew from his brother Ted.

Pennies From Heaven - Howard Crosby **Panjandrum 002** **$10.00** **USA**

1. Pennies From Heaven 2. Just One More Chance 3. I Can't Begin To Tell You 4. A Pocketful Of Dreams 5. Love In Bloom 6. It Must Be True 7. Please 8. I Apologise 9. I'm Through With Love 10. Moonlight Becomes You 11. June In January 12. Too-Ra-Loo-Ra-Loo-Ral 13. Did You Ever See A Dream Walking 14. Where The Blue Of The Night 15. Stranger in Paradise.
Running time: 47 minutes

Here's how Howard described the project in an email to Malcolm.
"Members can obtain a copy of the CD by writing to me at PO Box 2056, Walla Walla, WA 99362, or requesting one by e-mail (crosbyent@valint.net). It should also be for sale on the internet soon, and I'll pass along details. Price $10. We tried very hard to be faithful to the original spirit of the arrangements, and I made an effort NOT to try and copy Uncle Bing, which is a ridiculous thing to attempt."
For me, the most striking thing about Howard's voice is its similarity of that to his other uncle - Bob. Certainly if you had put the CD on and asked me to identify the singer, I would have said Bob without question. Howard won't mind my saying I'm sure that he is a golfer who sings (he's a scratch player) whereas his esteemed uncle was the other way around, but it's a pleasant tribute with a modern feel to the original arrangements.

Bing - The Road To Rhythm And Romance **Rose Records RRCD 1028** **UK**
starring John Petters and His Swing Band

1. Where The Blue Of The Night 2. Some Of These Days 3. You Brought A New Kind Of Love To Me 4. Brother Can You Spare A Dime 5. Please 6. I've Got A Pocketful Of Dreams 7. I Found A Million Dollar Baby 8. My Honey's Lovin' Arms 9. I Surrender Dear / Just One More Chance 10. Love Is Just Around The Corner 11. Don't Fence Me In 12. From Monday On 13. Lazy 14. Jeepers Creepers 15. I Love You Samantha 16. Moonlight Becomes You 17. After You've Gone 18. Where The Blue Of The Night (theme)
Running time: 54 minutes.
Member John Petters has been touring the UK with his own centenary tribute to Bing and the CD has been lovingly put together to tie in with this. Good sleeve notes by John indicate that he has not tried to clone Bing and he describes the CD as "an affectionate salute to the man who introduced me to jazz." Radio presenter Paul Barnes adds a few words and details are given of the ICC. This is a pleasant CD of mainly jazz oriented recordings with John taking the vocals as well as playing the drums. The CD can be obtained from John Petters Productions, New House Farm, Hospital Drove, Long Sutton, Lincs PE12 9EN or on line at www.traditional-jazz.com. Price £12.95

DVD AND VIDEO

For many people, the most overdue DVD release has been that of "High Society". Well, finally it's here, with releases both in UK and US formats.

High Society **Warner Home Video 65713** **£12.99** **USA /UK**

I think that most of us are familiar with the plot of the 1956 musical which for many people marked the high spot as well as the end point of Bing's career on screen. Great score, great stars and of course the DVD offers CD-like ability to jump from song to song - it's worth the price for that alone. Alongside the film itself, there are one or two interesting extras on the DVD, including the original trailer, which features Bing with Ed Sullivan, a nine-minute piece on "Cole Porter In Hollywood", featuring the sole surviving member of the cast, Celeste Holm. There's also a two-minute newsreel of the film's Hollywood premiere, although strangely, none of the cast feature.

For those more interested in some to the technology behind both the original film and this DVD, a couple of pieces from the internet will be of interest. First, Robert Harris on www.thedigitalbits had this to say.

"As a 1956 production, "High Society" is at the center of the problematic Eastman color period. I'm pleased to report that Warner's Ned Price has really done his homework on this project, which has apparently been in the works for about three years. The elements which he has created and the transfer and compression that brings it to DVD make the film look as it has not in years. But the technical wizardry doesn't stop there. It has been rumored that because this was Bing Crosby's initial production (one of the producing entities was Bing Crosby Productions) for MGM, having recently left Paramount after decades, that he requested and MGM granted his wish that the film be photographed in VistaVision. Whether this is accurate or not I don't know for certain, but this information has been out there for years. Fact or fiction, it makes sense and the film benefited by it.

"High Society" was initially to be a CinemaScope production and the intended audio design was full stereo, which would be heard via the print's magnetic tracks. When the change was made to VistaVision, essentially a monaural process, MGM's longtime head of audio Douglas Shearer (brother of Norma Shearer) warned the studio that they would not be able to release in stereo. Regardless, the audio stems were recorded and prepped for stereo, and the studio has chosen to finally use these elements for a full stereo mix, which is cause for celebration. From the opening logo to the brilliant silver main titles and the production photography beyond, "High Society" is now a treat for both the eye and ear. My hat is off to Mr. Price and the work

that he has put into bringing "High Society" back in perfect form."

Ken Barnes, writing on the Crosby internet museum site, added a further word of explanation.

"Theatrically, "High Society" was always in mono. While it was MGM's intention to shoot in Cinemascope, Bing had signed a contract - while at Paramount to do three films in the new VistaVision process (which had no accommodation for six-track sound). The first was "White Christmas," the second was "Anything Goes" and the third had to be "High Society" (regardless of studio). But because MGM had gone ahead and recorded the soundtrack in 6-track magnetic sound, a few years ago they did a stereo re-mix for the second laserdisc release. Now, for the FIRST time, the High Society soundtrack is released in Dolby Digital 5.1. This may not hold much interest for people who lack the 5-channel set-up and decoder. But it sure is of interest to the rest of us. At last, this is "High Society" as it should be seen and heard. I think Warners deserve a round of applause."

"High Society" can also be obtained as part of the following.

Classic Musicals Collection - The Cole Porter Gift Set (High Society / Kiss Me Kate / Les Girls / Broadway Melody of 1940 / Silk Stockings) Warner Home Video List price $89.92, Amazon $67.44 UK/USA

A trio of DVDs featuring six of Bing's movies can be now be obtained in the USA. UK readers need a DVD that will play Region 1 discs to be able to view the following.

Birth of the Blues / Blue Skies	**MCA/Universal**	**$12.99**	**USA**
A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court / Emperor Waltz	**MCA/Universal**	**$12.99**	**USA**
Rhythm on the River / Rhythm on the Range	**MCA/Universal**	**$12.99**	**USA**

Hopefully, these three releases will be the start of a trend that will eventually bring us Bing's entire film career on DVD. All three releases are excellent and the picture quality is breathtaking when compared with video versions. The only minor complaint is about the sound on "Rhythm On the River" which is OK but not outstanding as it is with the other films. Incidentally, the pairings don't seem to have been the product of a great amount of thought - "Blue" being the only linking feature between the first two films and "Rhythm" likewise for the third. Just what the middle two have in common - apart from both being in colour - I don't know! The only worry with this approach to pairing is that MCA will end up with some very odd combinations if they see it through. But who cares? If we get all the films at good prices, I for one will be very satisfied.

The Bob Hope 100th Birthday Tribute Collection Universal Studios Home Video $ - various USA

Just as the CDs have been coming at a pace to mark the Hope birthday, so have the DVDs. This collection brings 17 of Hope's best known screen features, including a quartet of "Road" - Road to Singapore (1940), Road to Zanzibar (1941), Road to Morocco (1942) and Road to Utopia (1946). These four come in a box set that you can have for $29.98 via Amazon. Road movie extras include a World War II short called "Hollywood Victory Caravan," a gallery of vintage photos and posters, and a documentary on Hope's real-life road trips to entertain the troops.

A further 13 Hope movies (including those with Bing content such as 'My Favorite Blonde' and 'Star Spangled Rhythm') are also available as part of the collection. Individual DVDs retail at $14.98 and are also available on VHS at $9.98. Even better news is that 'My Favorite Blonde' is packaged on one DVD with 'Star Spangled Rhythm' for a bargain price of $13.48.

The Ultimate Bob Hope Collection 3 DVD R2 Entertainment $59.98 USA

This is a 3DVD collection that features Hope TV work over almost 50 years. Here's what Karl Wachter, reviewing the set on the Amazon site has to say about it.

"The Ultimate Bob Hope Collection" features over six hours of highlights from over a half-century of television specials by a true legend in American entertainment. In his staggering 50 years on NBC, Bob Hope created such a formidable mass of comic clips, bloopers, and salutes to troops, that a mere three-DVD set can barely contain them. Still, the collection brings together, for the first time on DVD, timeless sketches with such notable wags as Dean Martin, Phyllis Diller, Johnny Carson, and Jack Benny, and celebrates countless moments of hilarity with some of the biggest stars of the century, including John Wayne, Lucille Ball, Bing Crosby, and Frank Sinatra. While this DVD set is, for the most part, a compilation of previous collections that have aired on NBC over the years, it still delivers the goods, and should prove a beloved addition to the collection of any Hope fan. It's a delight to have one of the most engaging comics of our time, and 50 years of him at that, at our very fingertips."

Citizen Kane Special Edition Universal Pictures DVD RRP: £19.99 VHS RRP: £12.99 UK

Ken Barnes has produced this 2-DVD Region 2 set of the film classic which is included here as there is some Crosby content in the package. The film and soundtrack have been individually cleaned, allowing for the utmost clarity of picture and sound without compromising the film's original depth and texture. The set also contains a wealth of special features, including "Anatomy Of A Classic" (a new 50 minute featurette presented by Barry Norman), Welles' original 1938 radio broadcast of 'The War Of The Worlds' and Welles' 1945 commercial recording of Oscar Wilde's 'The Happy Prince' featuring Bing and supporting cast with music by Bernard Herrmann. I'm told that the quality of 'The Happy Prince' recording is excellent but I hadn't heard it as we went to press.

Sinatra: The Classic Duets Hart Sharp Video DVD RRP: $19.99 VHS RRP: $14.99 USA

This is the DVD (Region 1) and VHS version of the PBS special originally broadcast in the USA in November last year. We gave details of a related CD issue which contains the songs from the compilation in BING #132. The publicity states:

Frank Sinatra "Classic Duets" features an incredible roster of many of the greatest and most influential jazz and pop singers of all time. Compiled from Sinatra TV specials that originally aired between 1957-1960, this highly collectable program includes complete musical performances and special interviews and commentary from the Sinatra family, Tina, Nancy and Frank Sinatra Jr. Highlights include Frank Sinatra performing with Ella Fitzgerald, Peggy Lee, Louis Armstrong, Dean Martin, Bing Crosby, Lena Horne, Nancy Sinatra, Elvis Presley and more.

The Bing content on the DVD is "Together Wherever We Go" (with Frank Sinatra and Dean Martin) from the Frank Sinatra TV Show of October 19, 1959 and "September Song" (with Frank Sinatra) from the Edsel Show of October 13, 1957.

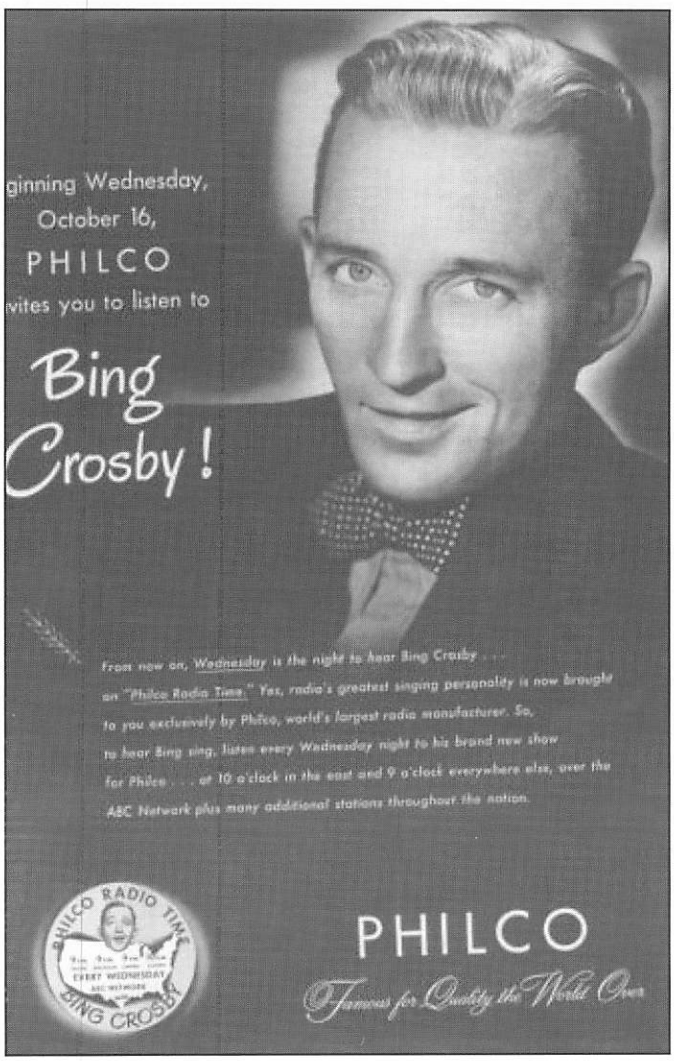
GOING GOING GONE

Newcomers to the Internet may be surprised to discover that on-line auctions are one of its most popular features. The best known site is www.ebay.com, where you can find anything from cars to cartoons available, often at giveaway prizes. All you need to participate is to register with Ebay, browse the various lists (or just type "Bing Crosby" in the search engine) and if you see something you fancy, make a bid. Ebay will automatically manage your bid up to what you have said is your maximum prize and tell you if you have been outbid. You can then decide whether to bid higher or not. Items are typically open for bidding for 7 days.

At any one time, you will find around 600 items of Crosbyana up for sale. LPs and 78 albums are common, as are photographs but its worth a trawl through because you never know what you might find. Here are just a few of the things that caught my eye during the past month or two.

Adverts and Posters

There are always plenty of trade ads and posters on the auction sites. Here are a couple of examples, both of them going for around $10.


ginning Wednesday,
October 16,
PHILCO
vites you to listen to
Bing
Crosby!
From now on, Wednesday is the night to hear Bing Crosby . . .
on "Philco Radio Time." Yes, radio's greatest singing personality is now brought
to you exclusively by Philco, world's largest radio manufacturer. So,
to hear Bing sing, listen every Wednesday night to his brand new show
for Philco . . . at 10 o'clock in the east and 9 o'clock everywhere else, over the
ABC Network plus many additional stations throughout the nation.
PHILCO
Famous for Quality the World Over

1940s Philco radios

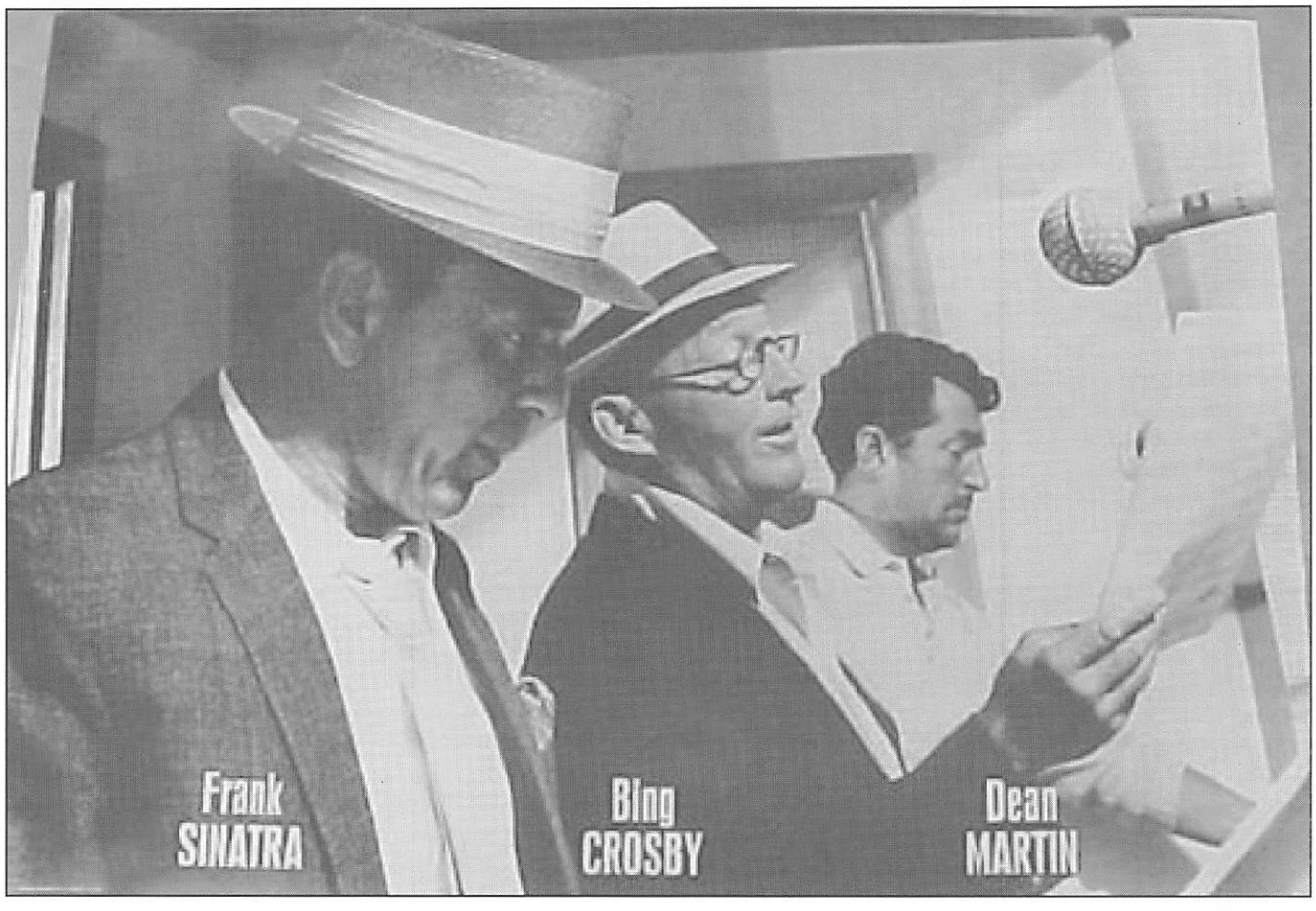
Original copies of Bing's Philco radio ads turn up from time to time. These usually fetch around $10. The ads are invariably originals and are sized around 10"x13". Very nice for framing.

1950s Remington

This one is from the Fifties advertising Remington razors, a campaign that was also behind Bing's "Music To Shave By" promo disc, of which over 6 million copies were pressed.

Bing, Frank and Dino

I've always liked this picture of arguably the 20th Century's three most popular vocalists at work in 1963. I picked up this 3' x 2' poster up for $7.99.



Letter to Charles Graves

Moving up a notch in pricing terms, a letter from Bing to British journalist Charles Graves fetched a handsome price of $125. The two-page typed letter, authentically signed "Bing" was on Bing's personal stationery, dated 'Palm Desert March 3, 1958'. Bing talks about a record for use on the BBC, playing good golf at Palm Springs - "I can only attribute my unusual prowess to the salubrious climate which prevails here. Very good for oldsters like myself." Bing also wrote at length about Bob Hope's then forthcoming visit to Russia :-

"I did a television show with Hope the other night, just prior to his departure for England for the formal opening of his new picture, 'Paris Holiday.' He asked me to get ahold of Jock Whitney in London in the hope that Jock could facilitate a visa for him to play Moscow, Russia. Although it seems to me that his ribald humor would do a great deal toward placing our already delicate relations with the Soviets in serious imbalance, I cabled Whitney and have not heard what the result was. He's a very brave fella it seems to me to risk an appearance in Russia. The Soviets must have quite a file on him, listing all the things he said about them through the years in his comedy routines, and he may get sprayed with a hot jet of borsche, right in the middle of his act. He is certainly a hard dog to keep under the porch, isn't he? However, being an old stay-at-home myself, I secretly admire the fellow."

And that's it for now. Always interested to hear of anything new that has come your way and that the rest of us might have missed. Drop me a line at 9 Arden Drive, Dorridge, Solihull, B93 8LP, UK or email me at ken54@blueyonder.co.uk

Ken Crossland

THE A-Z OF BING'S MOVIES

Keith Parkinson continues his alphabetical look at Bing's film career.

MR. MUSIC (Film). Bing was not in favour of Paramount retitling Samson Raphaelson's stage play "Accent on Youth". He thought that *Mr. Music* was immodest as it referred to his character in the film. Paramount had previously filmed the story in 1935 under its original title and Bing felt a title change unnecessary for the 1950 remake. Of course, the title was irrelevant. It was the name above the title which sold tickets and in 1950 Bing was placed third in the "Motion Picture Herald" list of top ten box-office stars. Paramount obviously wanted to play down the accent on youth in the original title because it was filmed yet again in 1959 as *But Not For Me.* It is interesting to see how the original story was adapted to suit the actors who played the lead. In Bing's case he was composer Paul Merrick and "Halliwell's Film Guide" summarised: "A college girl is employed to keep an idle middle-aged songwriter's nose to the grindstone". The 1935 plot summary was given as: "A secretary falls in love with her middle-aged playwright employer". The middle-aged man in that one was Herbert Marshall. Clark Gable was only a year away from death when Halliwell's potted plot line for the final re-make stated: "An ageing, washed-up Broadway producer is loved by his young drama student secretary". I thought the Crosby version found him performing on auto-pilot. The main Johnny Burke-James Van Heusen songs were not their best - "High on the List", "Wouldn't it be Funny", "Accidents Will Happen" and "Life is so Peculiar". And the film's title song did not even warrant a Crosby vocal. It is tucked away in the body of the film and sung by a chorus of amateurs putting on a college show.

MULHALL, JACK (1887-1979) Actor. By the time Jack Mulhall shared screen time with Bing he was on a gentle descent to playing supporting roles. He'd been a leading man in silent pictures and his voice adapted well to talkies. But by then, age was not on his side and by the time of *Reaching for the Moon* in 1930 he was playing second lead to Douglas Fairbanks. He did not appear in the Crosby sequence in that picture. Some five years later he was at the bottom of the cast list of *Mississippi*. Paramount continued to use him in small parts and in the same year as *Mississippi* he was in *The Big Broadcast of 1936, Two for Tonight* and *Anything Goes*. In *Two for Tonight*, when the character played by Bing is injured it is "Doctor" Jack Mulhall who attends to him. For *Anything Goes* he was cast as the ship's purser. By then he took whatever was on offer and when he made his last film, *The Atomic Submarine* (1959) he had been seen in hundreds of films.

MURRAY, LYN (1909-1989) Orchestra leader, composer and musical director. Although Lyn Murray is better known to Crosby collectors for leading the orchestra on some of Bing's early 1950s recordings, he had a second career in the movies, making his musical director debut on *Son of Paleface* (1952), in which Bing made a gag appearance. His best known work is as composer of the score of the 1955 Hitchcock thriller *To Catch a Thief.*

MUSE, CLARENCE (1899-1979) Actor. Black actor Muse was in two of Bing's Paramount pictures. In both of them he played submissive Uncle Tom characters. His character's name was Clarence in both *Welcome Stranger* (1947) and *Riding High* (1950) although he was called Whitey as well in the latter. He was also a prisoner in the Bob Hope comedy *My Favorite Brunette* (1947), in which Bing had a walk-on part at the end. His screen career would have been different in the 21st century, particularly as he was the holder of a law degree, a founder of the Lafayette Players of Harlem and the composer of a number of spirituals. In fact, towards the end of his life he played more dignified characters in such as *Buck and the Preacher* (1972) and *The World's Greatest Athlete* (1973). It was in 1973 that he was one of the first inductees to the Black Filmmakers Hall of Fame. Crosby film watchers will always remember him as adding considerably to the appeal of three songs in *Riding High.* He joined Bing on "Someplace on Anywhere Road" and Bing and Coleen Gray on "Camptown Races" and "Sunshine Cake".

MUSIC MAIDS, THE Vocal quintet. At the time that *East Side of Heaven* went before the movie cameras in February 1939, Bing was halfway through his fourth season of one hour Kraft Music Hall broadcasts. That also happened to be the month when the Paul Taylor Choristers, who had been providing vocal support for Bing on the show, were replaced by the Music Maids. The film provided an opportunity to see the girls together with Bing. They were cast as waitresses in a scene in a cafe and join him in singing "Hang Your Heart on a Hickory Limb". At the time they were a fivesome: Trudy Erwin, June Clifford, Dorothy Messmer, Alice Ludes and Denny Wilson. During their stay on KMH the composition of the group changed, but in *East Side of Heaven* we see the originals.

MY FAVOURITE BLONDE Film. This 1942 Paramount comedy starring Bob Hope came at a time when the *Road* series was establishing Bing and Bob as comedy sparring partners. Towards the end of the film, Bing, leaning against a pillar asks Bob for a match. Hope obliges and then mutters, "Couldn't be".

MY FAVOURITE BRUNETTE Film. Five years after *Blonde*, Hope went before the cameras again with another *My Favourite.* The writers came up with another closing sequence gag. Hope is due to be executed but is reprieved at the last minute. The frustrated executioner throws his cap on the ground. It is Crosby.

MY HEART AND I Song. Although the 1936 Paramount production *Anything Goes* was based on a Cole Porter musical of two years earlier, the studio decided to supplement the Porter songs with a number of specially composed ones. Leo Robin and Frederick Hollander came up with a couple. Bing sings one of them, "My Heart and I" in two separate sequences. Whilst hiding in a lifeboat he serenades Ida Lupino and later he treats the song less seriously when he tackles it in a foreign accent whilst sporting an obviously false beard.

MY HEART IS A HOBO Song. It was composed by Johnny Burke and James Van Heusen for *Welcome Stranger* (1947). Burke's clever lyric allows Bing some inner reflection but it does little to advance the film's plot.

Bing Sings 'My Heart Is A Hobo' as Barry Fitzgerald listens.

MY HEART IS TAKING LESSONS Song. Burke was providing lyrics to James Monaco's melodies when this was written to order for *Doctor Rhythm* (1938). Bing sings it early in the film in order to introduce us to his leading lady played by Mary Carlisle. It is a charming sequence in which Bing is strolling through a park singing "My Heart is Taking Lessons" with bird song accompaniment. It catches the lady's attention and she applauds before tossing him a coin. It is reprised twice. The first time is when Bing sings it to the Mary Carlisle character as she leaves to board a liner. Her final personal serenade is at the end of the film when a happy ending is sealed by Bing taking us up to "The End" title.

MY LORD DELIVER DANIEL Song. *King of Jazz* (1930) provided an early opportunity to see as well as hear Bing but it was the Crosby voice only for this Negro spiritual. It was used in the film's early cartoon sequence which told us how Paul Whiteman was crowned "King of Jazz".

MY MAMA THINKS I'M A STAR Song. This was written by Johnny Mercer and Harold Arlen for the film *Here Come the WAVES* (1944). It was not used in the film and the sentiment conveyed in the song's title indicates that it could just as easily have served as a Betty Hutton sung ditty.

MY MELANCHOLY BABY Song. Although not usually regarded as a lullaby as such, the tempo at which Bing sings "My Melancholy Baby" to young Carolyn Lee in a scene from *Birth of the Blues* (1941) shows how effective it can be in sending someone to sleep. The soothing Crosby rendition is helped by the simple trombone and guitar accompaniment. The song was written by George A. Norton and Ernie Burnett some thirty years before *Birth of the Blues*. Bing made a studio recording for Decca in 1938.

MY SILENT LOVE Song. Even the most dedicated student of Bing's film songs will be hard pressed to hum a chorus of this Edward Heyman-Dana Suesse song featured in the Mack Sennett short *Blue of the Night* (1933). It opens that film in a scene where Bing is concluding a night club engagement. He never made a studio recording of the song but it was available on an LP of Crosby recordings taken directly from the soundtrack of his early films (Biograph 9199 508 "Where the Blue of the Night...").

MYERS, HARRY (1882-1938) Actor. In a scene where Bing sings "Down by the River" in *Mississippi* (1935) the part of the stage manager is played by Harry Myers. By then this one time leading man of silent pictures and early talkies was taking whatever work came his way. He had also directed films. There is another filmic link with Bing: Myers played the role of the blacksmith in the 1921 version of *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court.*

NAISH, J. CARROL (1897-1973) Actor. In view of his deeds and thoughts he was aptly named Blackie in *Birth of the Blues* (1941). Perhaps the audience cheered when he got his come-uppance by being shot by one of his own hoodlums. His background provided an early training ground for some of the darker roles he took on: he grew up in a tough area of New York and dropped out of school to enlist in the Navy. He broke into films the hard way. He arrived in California towards the end of the silent era via a tramp steamer and accepted early work in Hollywood as a bit player and stunt man. By the early 1930s the studios had recognised his versatility. He was equally believable as an Italian, Jew, Indian, Arab and - at the end of his career - Chinaman. He was in the first *Batman* serial and continued as a menacing presence in *The Monster Maker* (1944), *The House of Frankenstein* (1945) and *The Beast With Five Fingers* (1946). By way of contrast he was cast in several Technicolor musicals including playing Sitting Bull in *Annie Get Your Gun* (1950). Like many actors who found film work hard to come by when the studio system started to crumble, he found work in television and a new generation came to know him as the small screen's 'Charlie Chan' in the late 1950s. Rather than taking on any meagre movie parts that might come his way he simply withdrew from the scene, appearing in only three feature films after 1960.

NAPIER, ALAN (1903-1988) Actor. He almost put Bing to death in *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court* (1949) where he played the part of the High Executioner. It wasn't a typical role for this suave character actor. His last major work for the big and small screen saw him cast as the butler 'Alfred' in the *Batman* television series which resulted in a cinema spin-off. That is how most people remember the tall (6' 5"), stately Englishman, who was a direct descendant of Charles Dickens and a cousin of British Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain. He had worked in Britain on stage and screen until the end of the 1930s. Hollywood gave him the opportunity to typify dignified Brits in such films as *A Yank at Eton* (1942), *Joan of Arc* (1948) - where he was the Earl of Warwick - and *My Fair Lady* (1964). Like the previous entry, when the decent parts stopped coming, he stopped acting.

NEW YORK EXPERIENCE Electrovision film. This was the third of a trio of medium length travelogues which involved computerised projectors and utilised a 180 degree screen. Bing had some financial involvement as an investor in Electrovision Productions Incorporated which is why he was in New York in June, 1973 to promote the film.

NEWMAN, ALFRED (1901-1970) Composer and musical director. Alfred Newman was MD on two films in which Bing appeared. In 1930 he was just making his mark when he worked on *Reaching for the Moon.* At the end of that decade he had established himself as an inspired composer and his musical direction for *The Star Maker* (1939) didn't stretch him all that much. By then he had received an Academy Award for his score for *Alexander's Ragtime Band* (1938). The year following the release of *The Star Maker* he received his second composer Oscar for *Tin Pan Alley.* He was nominated for more Academy Awards than any other musician who worked in films, and he won a record nine Oscars in all. Leonard Maltin, in his Movie Encyclopaedia, describes him as "arguably the most important musical craftsman who ever worked in Hollywood, Newman was associated with more than two hundred films during his 40-year career. He scored every conceivable type of film, and as longtime head of the music department at 20th Century-Fox supervised many other scores as well." His symphonic scores are constantly being re-recorded whilst specialist companies regularly reissue his original soundtrack work. Newman rarely accompanied popular singers but he found time to act as the musical director for the touring Hollywood Victory Caravan in 1942 when he would have provided support to Bing and also he conducted one Crosby session in 1954 that produced "Who Gave You the Roses" and "We Meet Again". Alfred Newman was the brother of composer Lionel Newman.

Keith Parkinson

Bing Crosby

June 26, 1975

Dear Gordy:

Been traveling a bit and only recently got your letter of June 11th. Glad to hear that the Crosby Years are nearing completion, and that you're aiming for a fall release.

Of course, it will be all right with me if you want to have them aired on individual U.S. stations.

As far as material from the albums I made in England recently is concerned, you should write Ken Barnes, 20 College Court, Sussex Place, London W6 9DY, and I'm sure he would supply you with some material.

The single, "That's What Life Is All About", I believe, is already in circulation over there.

Thanks for your good wishes, and I must tell you I'm going up and do the Merv Griffin Show today. I believe Rich Little is on the panel. I'm not positive about this, but it seems to me I've heard something to that effect.

I know you'll want to catch that show and it's scheduled for airing on the Griffin Show on July 25th, but I don't know whether or not information of this kind is of any value to Canadian radio listeners. Possibly they're on a different schedule

Very best regards,

Bing

Bing Crosby

BC:lm
Mr. Gordon Atkinson
21 Alderbrook Drive
Ottawa K2H 5W4, Canada

VARSITY

THE YOUNG MAN'S MAGAZINE

BASEBALL, BING AND ME
By BOB HOPE

JUNE 20¢
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